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General Assembly
Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

16th plenary meeting
Saturday, 25 September 2010, 9 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m.

Address by Mr. Jurelang Zedkaia, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Mr. Jurelang Zedkaia, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Jurelang Zedkaia, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Zedkaia: I bring the warm greetings of "Yokwe" from the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Every September since the country became a member of the United Nations in 1991, leaders of the low-lying Republic of the Marshall Islands have been reminding the international community of the need for full global action on climate change.

We have no mountains or high ground; we have only our narrow archipelago resting a metre above the ocean. There has been enough talk, and too much repetition. It is now time for meaningful action, creative cooperation and visible results to address climate change. If we fail in the short-term, the economic and moral costs for our low-lying islands — and eventually the whole world — will be beyond calculation.

The global commitment at Copenhagen to safeguard the most vulnerable faces a true litmus test: will our local communities see visible results leading towards a climate-resilient future? I urge that by the time of the climate change talks in Cancún nations build political trust through "fast start" finance, by providing transparent information and actively turning commitments into results.

We cannot wait for the uncertain path to achieve a full multilateral climate agreement, and we cannot allow laggards to set us back. Those most vulnerable and those willing to confront the challenges facing us must take leadership in this process by putting forward our own agreement spelling out real and ambitious commitments and actions to address climate change. And we urge others to follow.

To work in true partnership we must first show our own commitment. The Marshall Islands Government has endorsed a new climate change road map, spelling out specific actions to cut our own emissions by 40 per cent by 2020, and concrete strategies to ensure that the growth of our local communities is safeguarded from climate impacts.

The Marshall Islands has made important progress towards achieving several Millennium Development Goals, but much remains to be accomplished. With our international partners, we must also better address climate change risks in the context of our core development.

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Practical and "shovel ready" adaptation actions taken now — water security, resource conservation and infrastructure protection — will sharply reduce the long-term risks to our security and sovereignty. But we cannot ignore such threats. It should be a matter of serious concern to the Secretary-General that we are actively contemplating risks to our territorial integrity and United Nations membership, that we are considering options to safeguard our population's political rights if our land —and our thin water table — becomes unusable in the face of rising seas.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands is known to the United Nations as a small island developing State, but we are first and foremost a large ocean nation. Our thin atolls may appear tiny on a map, but our exclusive economic zone is over 2 million square kilometres. As Chair of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement, I address the United Nations on behalf of a unified political bloc vested in ensuring the future of the Western and Central Pacific, the world's largest viable tuna fishery.

The development pathways of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement are narrow and limited, and at the highest levels we have committed to putting a firm stop to the unrestricted global harvest of our resources. The status quo of overfishing is unacceptable; it has strangled our development and threatened the viability of our resources. We have closed off surrounding pockets of international waters, and if our development and ecosystem needs so demand, we will close off more.

We currently realize only a tiny fraction of a multibillion-dollar industry — only one penny from each can of Pacific tuna — and we are seeking global support and economic partnership to grow our benefit. Without political and economic cooperation in regional fisheries decision-making, and unless fishing targets are in line with science, the collective economic development of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement will remain at a standstill as our coastal resources decline. We have already driven our partners to achieve positive action. However, far greater efforts are needed, from both United Nations agencies and regional fisheries management organizations, to identify time-bound strategies which assist us in realizing a greater share of benefits from our own resources.

The United Nations must make faster progress towards reflecting modern twenty-first-century dynamics. The Security Council should be restructured to accommodate those nations whose size, leadership and responsibility — in particular, the Group of Four of Japan, Germany, India and Brazil — indicate a deserved role as permanent members. Further efforts should also ensure that Africa and small nations, including island States, have an improved voice.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands welcomes the progress achieved on both sides of the Taiwan Straits. The pragmatic and moderate actions of Taiwan should not be overlooked by the United Nations, and deserve further encouragement. I call upon the United Nations system and Member States to be open-minded and identify appropriate means to accept Taiwan's participation within specialized agencies, including the International Civil Aviation Organization, and in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In particular, recognizing the commitment to reduce emissions by the 23 million people of Taiwan — a fellow island nation — in addressing climate change is in the common interest of us all.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands welcomes the leadership of the United Arab Emirates as host of the International Renewable Energy Agency. We look forward to pursuing increased partnership with the United Arab Emirates and to establishing a dialogue with the Arab League on investment and development assistance in the Pacific region.

Finally, I must address one of this year's most important issues within the United Nations. Member States and leaders must improve progress towards achieving the goal of stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and pursue the peace and security of a world without them.

The Marshall Islands has a unique reason for seeking the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. During our time as a United Nations Trust Territory, 67 large-scale surface tests of nuclear weapons were conducted on our homeland, explicitly authorized under two United Nations resolutions, in 1954 and 1956. No people should ever bear such a burden. For decades, we have told the United Nations about our communities who are still displaced, about the deliberate use of our people in scientific experiments and of ongoing health impacts inherited through generations. We continue to face the challenges of a

United Nations-era nuclear waste storage site, surrounded by rising waters, towards dealing with which we lack resources or technical capacity.

We acknowledge important and positive actions already taken by partners, including our former administrator, the United States, but we need, and deserve, improved attention and assistance from the United States, as well as from the United Nations system and multilateral bodies.

I also acknowledge the support of the Pacific Islands Forum, including the leadership of the outgoing chair, Australia, as well as of the Non-Aligned Movement, in ensuring that this year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons acknowledged the need to address sites contaminated by testing. I fully expect that Member States of the United Nations will be willing to further recognize that a special responsibility exists towards former United Nations Trust Territories adversely affected by nuclear testing. As the United Nations maps a global future of non-proliferation, the past legacy of nuclear activities can no longer be ignored.

The message is the same for nuclear weapons, global security and freedom from terrorism, or climate change: international law is not an empty promise.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Jurelang Zedkaia, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Nicholas Joseph Orville Liverpool, President of the Commonwealth of Dominica

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Mr. Nicholas Joseph Orville Liverpool, President of the Commonwealth of Dominica, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Nicholas Joseph Orville Liverpool, President of the Commonwealth of Dominica, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Liverpool: I begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your well-deserved election to preside over the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Additionally, I take this opportunity to thank Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of Libya for his effective, strong and dynamic leadership during the sixty-fourth session and to salute Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tremendous efforts in promoting global peace, security and development.

I address the Assembly as we confront the second decade of this millennium, which brings such tremendous opportunities for mankind. Scientific and technological innovations have made the world a truly global village characterized by continuing connectivity and unimagined possibilities for facilitating global development. These technologies, integrating as they do even the smallest and traditionally most distant countries into the day-to-day activities of the world community, have the potential to combat hunger, eradicate poverty, generate employment, and elevate the standard of living of people throughout the world, without compromising the integrity of our ecosystem and planet Earth.

However, in order to realize the full potential of these opportunities, the community of nations now needs to muster the courage to pursue with determination reforms in international and multilateral institutions such as the United Nations which will ensure equality of treatment, and bring the benefits of development to those countries which, in consequence of small size, are often the least endowed, and most vulnerable in today's world community.

The formulation and pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has brought the world's attention to the main issues of development, especially the challenges faced by developing countries. It also brought to the fore the nexus which exists between financial, social and economic development on the one hand and the sustainable use of natural resources on the other.

By and large, we in the developing world have lived up to the commitments which we made, by mobilizing domestic financial resources for development and making major structural changes, even in the face of an increasingly hostile economic, financial and trading system. Those efforts have been

coupled with international resources for development in the form of foreign direct investment and official development assistance. The results to date have been encouraging when one considers where we were at the beginning of the millennium. There still remain, however, a number of unresolved global issues which have stymied the efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

We suggest, therefore, that the next five years before the target date of the MDGs must see a reconfiguration and acceleration of efforts by all Member States. This should begin with the fulfilment of commitments already given by developed countries, and South-South cooperation must be strengthened in keeping with the kind of solidarity now being demonstrated by Venezuela, Cuba, China, Brazil and other such developing countries.

Negotiation of the Doha Development Round must be concluded within a reasonable time, and in that regard the very small States of the developing world must continue to insist, even as others resist it, on meaningful recognition by the global community of the principle of special and differential treatment, rather than a "one size fits all" approach, as a central principle permitting beneficial economic adjustment for countries like my own. This will provide developing countries with an opportunity to compete in the global trading system and place greater emphasis on trade rather than aid.

The phenomenon of climate change has been well documented by the United Nations and other institutions over the past decade. In fact, we in the Caribbean and other small island developing States can speak of our experience with the increasing intensity of hurricanes, droughts, floods, destruction to coastal areas and rising sea levels. These have had severe impacts on our agriculture, tourism, and physical infrastructure, especially along our coasts, leading to an increasingly high cost for adaptation and mitigation, resulting in the diversion of funds which otherwise would have been used for social and economic development. Climate change, therefore, has become a major threat to the ability of most developing countries to achieve the MDGs.

For almost two decades the United Nations has recognized the special economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities of small island developing States. Since the Mauritius meeting in 2005, their situation has become even more precarious. The impacts of the world food and fuel crises in 2007 and the financial and economic crisis in 2008 have clearly demonstrated the open and vulnerable nature of our economies. This, coupled with the impact of climate change, strengthens the case for a unique position for small island developing States and hence a more prominent place within the United Nations system as a recognized category, with all the attendant benefits and obligations.

Despite our many challenges, small island developing States continue to demonstrate strong leadership, particularly in the area of climate change and in the work of the United Nations in general. Significant progress has been made in the areas of the protection of biodiversity, strategies for promoting renewable energy, and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. These efforts need to be complemented both by the United Nations system and by other Member States, especially the developed countries.

It is regrettable that to date no consensus has been reached on the best way to deal with what we consider a clear and present danger to our planet. The failure at Copenhagen should be further motivation for all countries to work assiduously towards an agreement in Mexico.

We commend the efforts being made towards a consensus on climate change; however, we maintain that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change should be the primary forum for negotiating the global response to climate change. We therefore call upon all Member States to work within this framework in order to arrive expeditiously at a binding agreement which will recognize the shared but differentiated responsibilities of Member States.

Since its establishment, the United Nations has played, as it continues to play, a critical role in fostering greater understanding among nations and maintaining peace and security throughout the world. The United Nations has also been able to reduce conflict and minimize tensions between countries and peoples. These efforts have been buttressed by other significant efforts, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In May this year the United Nations held the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Dominica supports the outcome of the Conference, and calls upon all Member States to adhere to the obligations of the Treaty. We call for a world free of nuclear weapons, and join the calls for total disarmament.

Small arms and light weapons continue to pose a major threat to peace and security throughout the world. Dominica is very concerned over the increase in that illicit trade in the Caribbean region. We are not convinced that the larger nations of the world comprehend the extent of the inability of smaller nations like my own, which bridge the producers and consumers of narcotic substances, to cope with this new horror.

The continued demand in the North for drugs produced in the South, and the growth of the related trade in small arms and light weapons, have placed us in the crossfire of these illicit activities. Yet it appears to us that the larger nations of the world only take decisive steps to cope with this situation when it has become untenable for themselves. In that context, we do not believe that sufficient consultation now exists to ensure that the smaller States are provided, on a continuous basis, with the capabilities needed for persistent attention to the problems that arise in our jurisdictions. This is yet another aspect of the case for special and differential treatment in the security and social development spheres.

The threat of terrorism is of concern throughout the world. Radical extremism has created an environment in which cultural and religious misunderstandings and misplaced anger have claimed the lives of thousands. We extend our sympathy to all the Member States which have lost citizens at the hands of those who have sought to destabilize Governments and to instil fear in the rest of humanity. By its very nature, the fight against terrorism requires global action. This must involve the efforts of the United Nations in fostering a culture of peace, tolerance and understanding among the peoples of the world.

During last year's general debate (see A/64/PV.7), Dominica recognized the important role of the United Nations in the rebuilding process of our sister nation of Haiti. We also called upon those Member States that had pledged assistance to make good on their promises in order to foster Haiti's social and economic development. Today, the challenges facing Haiti have been magnified to a degree which requires further commitments from all Member States of the United Nations. The destruction wrought in Haiti by the earthquake in January has made the need for resource mobilization a matter of extreme urgency.

In March the United Nations hosted the International Donors' Conference towards a New Future for Haiti. Dominica wishes to commend the organizers and the contributors to this initiative. During the Conference several Member States pledged their support for the reconstruction efforts. Commitments of several billion dollars were made. Sadly, to date the Government and people of Haiti have been able to access only a fraction of those pledges. We call on all Member States to make good their promises so as to ensure that the rebuilding process can continue and to avoid further deterioration of the political, social and economic situation of that country.

The focus in rebuilding Haiti should be not solely on physical infrastructure, but also on the building and rebuilding of institutions to strengthen the governance of Haiti and to empower its people through technology transfer and capacity-building. It should also include development of the productive sectors to place Haiti on a path to economic independence.

Most important, the international community must recognize and accept that the Government and people of Haiti must be placed at the centre of the reconstruction process so as to engender a spirit of unity of purpose, ownership and meaningful partnership, even at these most challenging times.

The crisis in Haiti presents both a challenge and an opportunity, not only to the international community, but also to the Governments and financial institutions to which that country remains heavily indebted. We call on those international financial institutions and Governments to cancel the remaining debt owed by Haiti in order to provide more latitude for that country to fully realize its recovery efforts. As regards trade, we urge all Member States to liberalize trading regimes so as to allow greater access of Haitian products into their markets without barriers.

Earlier I spoke of the threats which plague mankind in the era of globalization. I also highlighted the need for multilateralism and the need for cooperation between States. Those challenges can be

overcome only in a global environment where there exist respect for each other's territorial integrity; non-interference in each other's domestic affairs; and respect for sovereignty and the right to self-determination. It is in this context that Dominica again calls on the United States of America to discontinue its economic blockade against the people of the Republic of Cuba.

The rule of law is an important aspect of international law. Adherence to our international obligations is important to the maintenance of peace and security and to ensuring that all persons, regardless of race, nationality, creed or gender, continue to believe in the international system and to recognize that this system is for the benefit of all peoples and nations, whether large or small. That is why the situation in which our sister nation of Antigua and Barbuda has been placed vis-à-vis its dispute with the United States of America is extremely unfortunate and must be remedied as quickly as possible. We urge the parties involved to quickly seek to resolve the situation and arrive at a negotiated settlement that is fair and just.

The citizens of this planet have come to recognize that new developments in technology have brought an interdependence among peoples and States as they vigorously pursue the development of their separate countries. They have also come to realize that there must be increasing cooperation between nations in order to ensure a deliberate and planned approach to the maintenance and development of the resources of this planet. In that connection, regional processes of cooperation have increasingly come to characterize the conduct of nations.

But as the technology of communication has increased international connectiveness, it has also become apparent that regionalism often proves insufficient, and that a global approach must be taken to new issues which arise. Therefore, my country strongly supports the principle that it is the United Nations, to which all countries turn in times of crises, that must play the fundamental role in the surveillance of all developments affecting our planet. Consequently, we hereby reaffirm our commitment to the central role that the United Nations should play in global governance.

The President (spoke *in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Commonwealth of Dominica for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Nicholas Joseph Orville Liverpool, President of the Commonwealth of Dominica, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will hear an address by the Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (spoke in *French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

King Mswati: It is a pleasure for me to address the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.

We meet following the historic review summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the High-level Plenary Meeting of the Assembly, which gave us the opportunity to review progress and share experiences and ideas on how best to achieve our set goals and objectives for 2015. As we return to our respective countries we go with renewed commitment to keep working harder to meet the MDGs.

I would like at the outset to extend our thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General and the United Nations agencies for their presence around the world. We commend the active participation of the United Nations in various missions, such as efforts to restore peace in conflict areas, and its role in disaster relief and in various exercises to fight hunger and poverty.

We pledge ourselves to continue to support the United Nations in its primary role of ensuring that all the nations of the world live peacefully with each other while supporting nation-building through development projects.

The theme for this sixty-fifth session, "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance", came at a most opportune time in

the life of the United Nations, since we have been calling for all our voices to be heard. I must hasten to state that all the wars and conflicts that we see around the world can only be resolved through peaceful dialogue and negotiations. The United Nations is the organization best positioned for this task. There is no place for unilateralism.

It is on this basis that the Kingdom of eSwatini reaffirms our call for the finalization of the United Nations reforms, with particular reference to the Security Council. It should be appreciated that the world today faces a new set of challenges, different from those that it faced when our Organization was founded in 1945; thus the urgent need for the United Nations to remain dynamic and transform itself to meet today's challenges.

One of the major organs that require immediate reform is the Security Council, which has seen a number of regions expressing a desire to gain membership, to ensure wider representation. The Kingdom of eSwatini stands by the African position, as clearly stated in the Ezulwini Consensus, that Africa should have two permanent and five non-permanent seats. We hope that during this session this matter will be finalized.

We in the African continent are committed to resolving all conflicts through peaceful dialogue. The coordination and cooperation between the African Union and its various regional blocs is beginning to pay handsome dividends. We now approach issues as a collective for better results. We are happy that the United Nations continues to work and cooperate with us in effecting our programmes for peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

The General Assembly will know that the African Union declared 2010 to be our Year of Peace and Security. We have made it clear that all perpetrators of coups and civil wars and all forms of conflict should be dealt with squarely and decisively. Indeed, we are committed to the promotion of lasting peace, because it is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development. We appreciate the support of the United Nations in our resolve to ensure that peace prevails in the continent and, indeed, the whole world.

I am happy to say that I personally had the honour of lighting and hoisting the African flame of peace twice this year. The Swazi nation prides itself on this, because we are a peaceful nation, which is telling the world that peace is the best formula for development.

Another issue that touches upon global governance is that of the Kingdom of Morocco. It is our considered view that the United Nations, working with relevant regional organizations, should work on the issue and find a lasting solution.

We note with concern the continued conflicts in Madagascar, Somalia, Darfur, the Middle East and Afghanistan, to mention just a few. We call for the restoration of peace in all those areas, as it is always disturbing to see people undergo so much suffering due to conflicts.

While Afghanistan is still undergoing its process of reconciliation and the reconstruction of its institutions, it is depressing to note that there are at times pockets that seem to disturb the peace process in that country. We must continue to work hard to find lasting solutions, because such instability affects peace and prosperity, not only in Afghanistan, but also in neighbouring States and the region.

The Kingdom of eSwatini draws hope from the promising developments in Iraq, as that country continues on the road to peace through restoration of its important institutions for self-determination.

Furthermore, we are also following with keen interest efforts to ensure peace between Israel and Palestine. We are pleased to note the concerted mediation efforts led by the United States of America in bringing the parties together in pursuit of peace in the Middle East. We support this process, and remain optimistic that it will reach its desired conclusion, so that the Israelis and Palestinians can live together in harmony. In order to concentrate all their efforts towards development and peaceful coexistence, we call upon them to reach a compromise and place the best interests of peace and security above everything else.

Developments in cross-straits relations between the Republic of China on Taiwan and the People's Republic of China continue to be a source of inspiration to us all. We note with appreciation that the Republic of China on Taiwan and the People's Republic of China have made impressive strides to promote mutual understanding leading to more trade and interaction between them. I am happy to say that Taiwan highly appreciates being allowed to participate as an observer in the World Health Organization.

Hopefully, this will also lead to Taiwan's participating in a similar manner in all other United Nations agencies. Of particular interest is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Our world today continues to be concerned about nuclear proliferation and the threat that weapons of mass destruction pose to human existence, world peace, economic development and the environment. The spread of nuclear weapons makes a mockery of our efforts for world peace and protection of the environment.

It is a disheartening fact that currently efforts to ensure accountability and compliance with United Nations resolutions are hindered by an apparent lack of impartiality in the processes meant to completely rid the world of deadly nuclear weapons. I call upon the United Nations to strengthen the capacity of the International Atomic Energy Agency to enable the inspectors to do their work more effectively, with the involvement of all the countries with nuclear capability.

The United Nations must never compromise the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; it must ensure that all countries, without exception, comply. Countries must be made to comply and be accountable within clear time frames.

It is my suggestion that we eliminate all weapons of mass destruction, because they present an uncertain future. Indeed, we need a fresh start so that we may regain the moral high ground in deterring whoever may have ambitions for nuclear capability in the future. For example, if we compel everyone to dismantle their nuclear capacity we will be able to rein in other countries which may still be developing their arsenal, without being accused of unfairness or bias.

A world free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction will allow us to concentrate on issues of sustainable development.

As a developing nation, the Kingdom of eSwatini is following with keen interest the issues surrounding the effects of climate change. As an agriculture-based economy, the Kingdom is also a victim of environmental degradation. We therefore look forward to the climate change Conference to be held in Mexico later this year. I trust that the ongoing negotiations will result in agreements acceptable to all parties. What is of paramount importance is for the developed world to honour pledges to assist developing countries in their mitigation and adaptation efforts.

It is a known fact that access to international markets for our products is one of the ways to grow our economies in our quest to eradicate poverty. We are encouraged that the developed nations have opened their markets for some products from developing countries. We look forward with optimism to an amicable conclusion of the Doha Round of talks, an outcome essential to boost global trade and economic recovery for the developing world.

As part of our development and poverty alleviation strategy, the Kingdom is ready to explore and exploit existing and emerging markets. Our focus is on limiting exportation of raw material by emphasizing the production of finished goods.

The Kingdom continues to promote equality in all sectors of our development spheres. We therefore welcome the recent establishment of the new United Nations entity for gender equality: UN Women. Women the world over continue to play key roles in contributing to the socio-economic and political development of our nations.

We are meeting as a family of nations that seeks to promote peace and coexistence among all nations of the world and bring hope for the future. Our people look to us, as leaders, to take the lead in promoting peace, as enshrined in the Charter.

We must find lasting solutions to all the challenges. They include poverty, unemployment, disease and global warming, but the major challenge is to make peace within and among all nations happen. By finding solutions, we shall indeed guarantee a clear road towards the achievement of sustainable development by all the nations of the world. We shall achieve that noble goal if we all reaffirm and adhere to the central role of the United Nations in global governance.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland for the statement he has just made.

His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Serbia.

Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Tadić: I stand before the Assembly gratified and in a position to salute it for playing a very important part in the process towards reconciliation in my region, and for supporting the consolidation of the new, modern Serbia. In a few days, we will proudly celebrate the tenth anniversary of our peaceful democratic revolution.

In a world confronted by so many threats, the United Nations must constantly reaffirm its original purpose and adapt to new challenges. The United Nations has confronted, through its many agencies, the scourges of discrimination, disease, hunger, poverty and environmental degradation. In other words, the United Nations has built a capacity to create rules that transcend frontiers, rules that we all respect.

One thing that we have all embraced, as Member States of the United Nations, is the wish to find solutions to all challenges through peaceful means, dialogue and consensus.

I opened with a specific reference to the General Assembly. A few weeks ago it adopted by acclamation resolution 64/298, proposed by Serbia and sponsored by the 27 States members of the European Union, acknowledging the content of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) regarding the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo.

The resolution is fundamentally status-neutral with regard to the status of Kosovo. All other interpretations do not correspond to the truth. The resolution welcomed the readiness of the EU to facilitate a process of dialogue between the parties. Serbia welcomes the resolution. We look forward to engaging in the process that will hopefully lead to a mutually acceptable compromise solution to the problem of Kosovo.

Mr. Ould Hadrami (Mauritania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We feel vindicated in our contention that the path to dialogue lay through the natural process of international legitimacy. The General Assembly sought an opinion from the International Court of Justice. The ICJ delivered an opinion. The General Assembly has now, as a consequence, called for dialogue. Moreover, that request comes as a consequence of a joint effort between Serbia and the European Union.

In the light of that, we sought reaffirmation of the validity of the international system as we know it. We feel proud that our faith in this process has produced results. We have always said that we are ready to engage in dialogue. But that dialogue must be framed by rules and accountability, and this has been achieved through the latest vote of the General Assembly.

Many have been involved in this process, and we are grateful for the contributions of all those who in the debate on the draft resolution expressed understanding for the position of Serbia. Our issue has been the first test of the new post-Lisbon institutions of the European Union, which we consider our natural and eventual home. We are encouraged by the commitment and sense of purpose of the leadership of these new institutions.

We should be very clear. Serbia has always maintained that the attempt to secede unilaterally is a violation of the basic principles of the Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). A vast majority of United Nations Member States refrained from recognizing Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. They have continued to abide by their Charter obligations to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country. On behalf of the Republic of Serbia, I once again sincerely thank those countries for their support and solidarity.

Serbia's position remains unchanged. The unilaterally declared independence of Kosovo will not be recognized by Serbia explicitly or implicitly. This is enshrined in our Constitution. We have repeatedly said that we seek dialogue, but within a framework of globally acknowledged law, the law of the United Nations. For this reason, we insisted on the process of

seeking the opinion of the International Court of Justice and the subsequent General Assembly resolution related to the Court's opinion.

Let me be very clear as to what the Court did and did not say. Its advisory opinion reaffirmed that Kosovo remains under the interim administration of the United Nations, and that Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and the United Nations Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government in Kosovo stay in force and continue to apply. That means that this part of our territory remains subject to an international regime mandated by the Security Council.

The centrality and leading role of the Security Council in determining the comprehensive settlement of the Kosovo issue remains paramount, and will provide legitimacy to the result. The Court also did not endorse the view that Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence was *sui generis* — a unique case. Nor did it endorse any avowed right to self-determination for the province's ethnic Albanians.

The Court chose to examine the language of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence, and held the view that the text of the declaration itself did not contain anything that violates international law. The Court, thus, did not approve the province's right to secession from Serbia, nor did it support the claim that Kosovo is a sovereign State.

The Court's opinion is clear: the unilateral declaration of independence was only "an attempt to determine finally the status of Kosovo" (*A/64/881, advisory opinion, para. 114*). The General Assembly resolution relating to the Court's opinion acknowledged this content of the Court's advisory opinion. It is within this framework that we are ready to follow the Assembly's resolution and to engage in a dialogue.

We are now ready to talk, and we will do so in good faith. Therefore, Serbia asks all Member States to engage fully in the spirit of their vote in the Assembly, in which they called for a dialogue to be facilitated by the European Union.

A dialogue requires trust. Soon the two parties will be talking to each other for the first time in many years. We must be patient and seek out those issues which allow confidence to be built on each side. There will be many issues to discuss, and some of them will be complicated.

All Member States can contribute to an atmosphere that creates trust. We are entering a phase in which creative solutions require political imagination, respect for our own democratic institutions and great skill. I trust that it can be a phase in which all parties leave behind them anachronistic analyses and diplomatic ambushes. We must be able to build confidence to have trust.

Serbia believes that the continued pursuit of recognition is futile and counter-productive to the spirit in which we now enter this phase. All those who wanted to make their point have made it, and we still do not have a clear settlement. I want to underline that it is of critical importance for Member States that have not recognized Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence to stay the course on non-recognition throughout the dialogue process. That will be a significant contribution to ensuring that unilateral attempts to impose outcomes of ethnic and territorial disputes are not legitimized, thereby preventing Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence from becoming a dangerous and destabilizing precedent.

Until now, statehood has never been attained without the consent of the parent State. A durable settlement on an issue of such magnitude and sensitivity has never been the product of compulsion; it always necessitates consent.

It would be equally harmful if there were attempts to alter realities on the ground while discussions get under way. Any attempt to change these realities through the use of force would bring an immediate end to the process of dialogue.

I address the Assembly today as a leader who believes that the future lies in seeking reconciliation. Our National Assembly adopted a historic Declaration on Srebrenica: a crime was condemned and an apology was extended. There is little precedent for such an action, and I am proud, in that it demonstrates the maturity of the democracy of Serbia.

I hope that more such gestures throughout the region will help us create a new region in which our shared history will unite us morally rather than divide us politically. For this, surely, is the foundation upon which the future will be built.

My guiding light is the history of the European Union. It should be for the entire region of South-East Europe. The European Union has been a story of

reconstruction and reconciliation. That story is not over. The Union faces its own challenges, and we in our region must assume the responsibility of emulating it. We must absorb the values and culture of today's Europe in order that the Union absorbs us.

This is a delicate exercise, in which expectations must be carefully nurtured. The EU is evolving. But so is our region. In this dynamic, we have to assume that the European Union will remain true to its word that the inhabitants of the region now referred to as the Western Balkans will all become citizens of the European Union. It would be a geographical, historical and cultural aberration if this were not so. However, as the region goes through its own changes, it is particularly sensitive to the signals that it receives from the European Union. We hope that as the new institutions of the Union take shape, we will have an increasingly clear communication from and with the EU.

It is also true that our region is changing. To a very large extent, it is changing to the good. We should recognize the many new levels of cooperation that exist in our region. The Western Balkans — which has been affected by the financial crisis — is a story of many small and larger incremental successes. In fact, relations have never been better. But the region must also acknowledge that as it develops its successes can generate new challenges.

There is one area, therefore, on which I wish to speak with a clarity that may be deemed undiplomatic. Organized crime is now a global industry. It is the dark side of globalization. It attaches itself to weak societies. It attaches itself to political and religious extremists. It attempts to buy and subvert democracies. Like water, it spreads to where it finds least resistance. It is global and globalized in its interconnections.

Organized crime, I want to state emphatically, is in the Western Balkans. I consider it to be the greatest single challenge to my country and to the whole region. It always has been present, and it was given solid foundations because of the wars in our region. But I fear that it is developing capabilities — acquired from the globalization of crime and access to technology — at a much faster pace. The criminals concerned are bringing drugs, guns, human trafficking and corruption into our societies. In doing so, they are using our region to spread into Europe. I fear that we are in a race against time in our region. The stark choice is that South-Eastern Europe will become either a valuable bridge between Europe and vital areas to the East or it will become the beachhead of organized crime trying to reach Europe.

We have a common responsibility as leaders in our region to eliminate this scourge on our societies, and Serbia will spare no effort in our quest to eradicate this threat. It is our responsibility to all our neighbours. For this reason there has been a growing number of meetings and consultations between us in the region on this matter.

But today I want to say that this issue cannot be addressed tactically and occasionally. It is a strategic issue that affects all of Europe. I am therefore asking that we all become alert to the next generation of threat.

In our region, we have a responsibility to create a strategic alliance against organized crime. We hope that all Western Balkan States will make fighting it a priority. We owe this to our citizens, we owe it to our neighbours in the European Union, and we owe it to the next generation.

Serbia has historically been part of global movements. That is why we are totally engaged in achieving membership of the European Union. That is why we support the United Nations system. It is also why we are now moving to reactivate the many relationships that we built historically, as part of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

My country is the largest successor to a founding member of the Movement. Serbia's capital, Belgrade, was the site of the First NAM Summit in 1961. I am proud that one of the capstone events marking the Movement's fiftieth anniversary will be celebrated in Belgrade next September.

As part of our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, we are strengthening many of our engagements and commitments worldwide through the Movement. We shall contribute to those countries that would welcome assistance, and we look to an intensification of cooperation. I hope that this is a clear signal that my Government believes in an active global engagement that will contribute to both global solidarity and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Serbia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Desiré Delano Bouterse, President of the Republic of Suriname

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will hear an address by the President of the Republic of Suriname.

Mr. Desiré Delano Bouterse, President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Desiré Delano Bouterse, President of the Republic of Suriname, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Bouterse: On behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Suriname, I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election to preside over this sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I am pleased to see Switzerland, one of the newest members of the Organization, occupying this high office, especially since his country has a long-standing and constructive record regarding international neutrality and respect for international order. I am convinced that his diplomatic experience, as well as his well-known in-depth knowledge of current international issues, will enable him to successfully discharge the important responsibilities of his office. As one of the Vice-Chairs, Suriname pledges its full support for his work agenda for this session.

I wish to express our appreciation to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki for his unwavering efforts in steering the Assembly's work at its sixty-fourth session.

I also pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, for his leadership and guidance of this Organization throughout the past years of crisis and turbulence.

It is a great honour for me today to address the Assembly, as a leader who recently received a mandate from the Surinamese people to realize sustainable economic and social development through our own efforts and with the support of all friendly nations.

Twenty-seven years ago I had the honour to address the Assembly. I then stated:

> "by the same token, we are dismayed by the fact that, in spite of the presence of the Organization on the international scene for almost four decades, its lofty goal of creating an international order based on respect for international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes seems today to be as elusive as ever". (*A/38/PV.28*)

Today we can conclude that things have not fundamentally changed.

The challenge we face is that of striking a proper balance between full recognition of the sovereignty of the individual Member States of the United Nations and the apparent need for global governance regarding the global issues that endanger the very survival of our planet and its inhabitants. We are not there yet. It has become obvious to Suriname that this balance can be achieved only when participants in the international arena refrain from using military force and/or economic coercion. We have even seen States abuse their own legal system to force their political will on another nation.

Restricting ourselves to the Caribbean region, the Republic of Suriname is deeply concerned about the persistence of the imposition for almost half a century of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba with the aim of changing developments of that nation's political, economic and social road map. Those coercive measures cause unnecessary hardship and have severe effects on the rightful development and well-being of the Cuban people. Suriname therefore joins Member States which since 1992 have consistently been calling in vain for the rejection of the unilaterally imposed embargo against Cuba. As is the case on the national level, the international community will prosper only when all values protected by the rule of law are distributed equally, notwithstanding the asymmetry that characterizes international relations.

My country finds itself at a crossroads in its history. The electorate gave its leaders a mission to create a society in which everyone participates and everyone shares in what the country has to offer, meeting their basic material means, and in which solidarity prevails. The aim is the creation of a just society in which people can develop themselves to their highest potential and become international role models and leaders in areas in which our society excels. No one will be left behind in this task of nation-building. My Government pledges not to waste, but to protect, our national inheritance and assets for future generations and the world. Moreover, we will seize every opportunity to generate greater national wealth.

We will devote special attention to groups who in the past have had limited scope for development. In this regard, I refer to our indigenous peoples and our countrymen living in tribal communities. Our intention is to gradually break the cycle of their isolation and considerably improve their quality of life.

When we look at the many national challenges facing us, it is clear that our task will not be easy. In almost all sectors of the economy and society we have suffered enormous neglect, and there has been a decline, stagnation and reversal of national growth. As a result, today many segments of our society have become desperate and hopeless. We therefore need a bold new visionary approach to give our people what they justly deserve as co-owners of a nation endowed and blessed with so many riches.

However, we need to overcome two huge challenges that since decolonization have haunted and blighted our national destiny as a people.

First, we must dismantle any lingering remnants of the colonial police State which blocks and obstructs the establishment of a free, democratic, constitutional State based on the pillars of an independent judiciary, a Government free of corruption, a legislature that acts in the interests of the people, and a free and independent press committed to the honest dissemination of information.

Another major challenge that we face is the transformation of our society from an economy which is merely a source of profit for foreign interest groups into one that is based and built on a healthy interdependence. Suriname needs a new national economic approach created by Surinamers and for Surinamers.

We realize that we are part of the global community, which as a result of technology is gradually turning into a global village, fostering intensive relations in both a negative and a positive sense. Despite all the resources and knowledge at our disposal, we are still faced with what seems an insurmountable challenge: to rid the world of extreme poverty, to ensure adequate education for our children, to stem the tide of infectious and other diseases, or to take responsible decisions on environmental sustainability. We have to recognize that with today's interdependence many challenges transcend national borders and that the ability of countries, in particular developing countries, to make progress on many of the international development goals does not merely depend on domestic policy choices. An international enabling environment in this regard is of increased significance.

Climate change is a global threat that will affect developing countries in a most devastating way. Suriname, with its low-lying coast, belongs to the top 10 countries which will be seriously affected by sea-level rise. This is ironic, because we are not culpable for the excessive levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, but we are about to bear a heavy part of the brunt.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, global biodiversity loss is high, so high that 2010 has been declared the International Year of Biodiversity by the United Nations in order to attract attention to this global problem. In this respect, Suriname could serve as an example for the world, as its laws to save forest and biodiversity date from the middle of the past century. We are proud to state here today that Suriname is rightly called the greenest country on Earth for its 90 per cent forest cover.

That having been said, it is ironic that a country such as Suriname, with such a good environmental track record, is overlooked and that the world's efforts are concentrated on countries that are using their resources unsustainably, thereby sending the wrong message globally. We believe that we should tackle this problem head on, starting at home, moving towards our immediate neighbours and from there to the subregion of South America and the Caribbean, thus creating a

substantial force at the world forum dealing with the ill effects of climate change.

It seems that the standing forest and the wealth of Suriname's biodiversity are being taken for granted by the global community, as there are no structures in place to provide incentives to continue on the path of sustainability. Despite that, we promise that our choices for development will duly respect a proper balance between nature and development.

Various high-level meetings have been organized to address issues of common concern, such as the fight against HIV/AIDS, the negative effects of climate change, arms proliferation, the effects of the global economic and financial crisis and transnational organized crime and its associated ills.

At this time it is necessary to draw special attention to the issue of non-communicable diseases, which is of great concern to all of us. The initiative of Caribbean Community leaders, subsequently endorsed by the Commonwealth, to organize a high-level meeting of the General Assembly in 2011 to address the rising incidence and prevalence of non-communicable diseases is very important. It highlights the ever-growing need for the international community to join forces in addressing this global barrier to development.

Although non-communicable diseases are currently not a part of the indicators for assessing progress in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), they undoubtedly have a negative impact on those Goals. We can no longer ignore this emerging health crisis, which disproportionately impacts the poorest people, pushing them further into poverty and deprivation. Therefore, the global development agenda needs to include measures to address this problem, if we do not wish to jeopardize the accelerated achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

We are aware of poverty and extreme human suffering resulting from natural disasters. We empathize with the peoples of Haiti, Pakistan, China, Chile and all other countries where major weather patterns have wreaked havoc. Suriname is of the opinion that all nations should effectively and adequately contribute to the alleviation of the dire needs of our fellow citizens of the world. These people deserve more than expressions of sympathy; they deserve to see that promises made to them are kept.

Finally, we want to share our thoughts on the structural causes of poverty and the resulting ill effects on societies. My Government believes that education related to survival skills and production is the only way to effectively eradicate poverty. Money given to poor people for the sake of one's own conscience is an absolute waste. Accordingly, we ask ourselves whether we should continue to use the phraseology "fighting poverty" or should instead start talking about pursuing wealth. Therefore, the slogan of my country in our lingua franca is: "Broko a pina, tek yu gudu", which means "Break away from poverty, by pursuing wealth".

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Suriname for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Desiré Delano Bouterse, President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Malam Bacai Sanhá, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will hear an address by the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Malam Bacai Sanhá, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Malam Bacai Sanhá, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Sanhá (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): First, I congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election to preside over the Assembly at this sixty-fifth session. I am convinced that our work will be crowned with success thanks to his proven competence and experience.

To the former President, Mr. Ali Treki, I express my recognition of the wise manner in which he conducted the Assembly's work during its sixty-fourth session.

My compliments also go to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and the entire United Nations team, the women and men who, on our behalf

and on behalf of the nations and peoples of the world, work throughout the four corners of the planet to preserve human dignity, in which are expressed the values of peace and security, resulting in the development of friendly relations among nations and in international cooperation. To them all I express our respect and admiration for their courage and selflessness.

Similarly, I congratulate the Assembly on the recent adoption of resolution 65/1, on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, 10 years after their adoption. This important document will certainly create a new climate for the achievement of the eight Goals by 2015.

My compliments to all those present are also extended on behalf of the people of my country, which just yesterday, 24 September, celebrated its thirty-seventh year as a sovereign, independent State. The country has undergone a series of transformations, but we must recognize that there remains much to be desired in terms of meeting legitimate aspirations for social and economic progress. Such progress would translate into improved quality of life and well-being for our combatant people, on whose behalf Amilcar Cabral spoke from this rostrum more than 40 years ago, in an historic statement in the fight against colonial domination.

Thus at the present session, when the peoples of the world meet to evaluate the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals and to define new strategies to achieve them by 2015, Guinea-Bissau is still dealing with essential, basic factors for the achievement of goals that are so fair and that everyone deserves: stability, peace and security.

Less than a year ago we dealt with tragic events that had a major impact on Guinea-Bissau's internal and external image and led to early presidential elections, which exactly a year and seven days ago resulted in my starting to guide the country's destiny. The heinous acts to which I refer were unanimously condemned. The international community supported the country in its efforts to prepare and hold elections which ultimately were considered to be free, fair and transparent, and at the same time to consolidate peace and internal security, particularly with reforms of public administration, of defence and security and of judicial power, and with support for the State budget.

There was a positive trend in projecting the image of the country and dealing with new challenges: the promotion of internal and institutional dialogue; the mobilization of development partners; the organization of a high-level meeting in New York; and the preparation of a planned donors' round table, scheduled to be held before the end of this year, to discuss the development of Guinea-Bissau.

Unfortunately, that trend contrasted with the incident of 1 April this year, which of course was to be condemned. The handling of the incident and its consequences did not receive the understanding of all the partners of Guinea-Bissau, despite the country's authority having been maintained with a dynamic harmonization at the local, bilateral, regional and international levels. In this world body, let me appeal to all our partners to proceed in the same spirit of friendship, solidarity, assistance and cooperation with our people and their democratically elected institutions, because it is now, in our current circumstances, that our country most needs such support.

The reform that we desire in our defence and security sector, for which we have sought international assistance, has become a matter of prime urgency and extreme sensitivity. The main target is the very men and women who 40 years ago bartered their youth and education — in other words, their future — for our national liberation: the same armed forces who were then so applauded and admired for their determination and courage in forging the freedom and independence of the peoples of Guinea and Cape Verde, as well as for their intervention in other theatres of war, following their international vocation. Today, an appropriate structure to attend to their basic needs is lacking, resulting in an erosion of dignity already won, and thus in a threat to the peace, stability and well-being of our people.

Another consideration is that Guinea-Bissau has an insular platform comprising more than 80 islands and reefs, where a confluence of favourable waters and winds creates an ideal microclimate for much of the world's fauna, in what could and should be a true paradise. Instead, due to an assumed inability of the authorities to exercise effective control, there is a risk that it may become a sanctuary of evil-doers who use and abuse the space and the local people, leading to a regrettable situation, giving us a terrible reputation and

potentially compromising the proper functioning of Government institutions.

The Assembly may find those facts frightening and deserving of condemnation. They are tragic and completely alien to the people of my country. A coordinated regional and global response is needed in order to take advantage of all the synergies that can be mobilized.

However, to this body of nations, of which we are proud to be an integral part, we bring more than a lament in the hope of an appropriate response not only commensurate with the problems but at the level of the capacity that mankind has already demonstrated. We are making our contribution as a people that is confident, mobilized and determined, a people proud of its past and determined to reverse the current situation. We bring a guarantee of multifaceted involvement in harmonizing an extensive internal dialogue, whose foundations we have just laid jointly with the Guinean parliament: an initiative on ways to consolidate peace and development. This will culminate with a conference on national reconciliation, to restore the promise of a positive and lasting commitment.

Despite the current serious situation, for which we take full responsibility, we have never confused our internal problems with those of our friends, and we take great pride in our present stable relations with our neighbours. Similarly, we are proud of the peaceful spirit of our people, who never blame others for our own problems and do not feel any animosity towards the thousands of world citizens who continue to choose our country as a place in which to settle.

During the period of instability we have nonetheless preserved some 15 per cent of our territory as a protected area and nature reserve, as has been highlighted in particular by international organizations such as UNESCO, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and others. That is a major contribution to meeting the universal concern for the preservation of biological and ecological balance in this International Year of Biodiversity, within the context of severe climate change that affects us all.

So, we call urgently for the solidarity and support that Member States can give my people. We appreciate and express the warmest gratitude for the attention we have received from our regional organization, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), headed by Nigeria, in the form not only of stabilization initiatives, but also of concrete support for Government programmes. We similarly salute the follow-up and attention provided by the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, which shows a spirit of determination at the bilateral and multilateral levels, as evidenced by the restoration of a climate of trust conducive to peace, stability and development.

Within the same framework, we salute the contribution of Portugal and Brazil, again at both the bilateral and multilateral levels, to keeping the world's attention focused on giving Guinea-Bissau another chance. This extends to various other countries and institutions that maintain with us a relationship based on partnership and cooperation. I think particularly of Senegal, Libya, China, Cuba, the United States, France, Algeria, Morocco and South Africa, among others, as well as ECOWAS, the African Union and the European Union, along with the United Nations itself, through the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau.

The unstable internal socio-political environment that I have outlined has a negative impact on management of my country's public finances, despite the Executive's great and broadly acknowledged efforts. This means that our financial situation is very difficult, despite some recovery in our growth rate, which stood at 2.7 per cent in 2007 and 3.5 per cent in 2008.

The international crisis of 2009 had a small direct impact, and the country registered growth of 3 per cent thanks to a good agricultural year. The increase in international basic commodity prices in 2008 accelerated inflation, which reached an annual average of 10.4 per cent, though it retreated in 2009. The good performance in 2008-2009 in the export of cashew nuts, representing 90 per cent of exports, led to an improvement in the balance of payments, including donations.

However, the external debt burden continued to be unsustainable. At the end of 2009 it was equivalent to 126 per cent of the corrected gross domestic product and 640 per cent of exports of goods and services. The fact that we were unable to complete the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative resulted in an accumulation of delays in paying the external debt.

In 2008 the Government concluded with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) a post-conflict programme, later extended to 2009, which successive

IMF missions evaluated as being broadly satisfactory. Hence, on 7 May this year the IMF Executive Board approved a three-year agreement with my country based on a credit facility which will cover the period 2010-2012.

The public administration of Guinea-Bissau has earned a very positive evaluation by the IMF and the World Bank, which reflects the extraordinary effort in fulfilling the programmatic targets set with regard to cleaning up public finances and regularizing major expenses. Therefore, it is essential that partners show no hesitation that might jeopardize the fulfilment of the decision-point requirements of the HIPC Initiative.

We are coming to the end of the first decade of the millennium, which had been declared a decade of globalization, with the promotion of a lasting peace and aimed at a new international order. We cannot slide backwards, nor can we show weakness in the face of the challenge that we have set ourselves in addressing problems such as migration, human trafficking and the trafficking of organs and trying to find ethically acceptable responses to them.

We support the efforts being made to resolve the conflicts in the Middle East, through coexistence of a Palestinian State with the State of Israel. Our membership of the Alliance of Civilizations and of the Community of Democracies in particular is based on the rules of peaceful coexistence among ethnicities and religions, and on the promotion of human rights.

We support global efforts to rehabilitate Haiti and we also follow with great attention and interest the process that will lead to the restructuring of the Security Council. We hope that this will result in a more equitable representation of the world and be a factor in the ascent of the African continent towards peace, democracy and development.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Malam Bacai Sanhá, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic.

Mr. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Ahmed (*spoke in Arabic*): On the grand occasion of the general debate of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, I congratulate the new President of the Assembly, Mr. Joseph Deiss, who is known for his political skills and wise leadership. I would also like to extend my appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, for the able manner in which he led our work. I hope this session will end successfully and produce recommendations and resolutions that will serve humanity and the world at large.

I further thank the Secretary-General for his strong and genuine interest in and commitment to addressing the critical international issues facing the world, and Somalia in particular.

This annual gathering brings together world leaders and their representatives in order to highlight positive and praiseworthy accomplishments and developments, and to identify common global challenges, emerging problems and their causes, and consequently to discuss and seek appropriate solutions for them.

This meeting comes at a critical moment, when our contemporary world faces a series of challenges ranging from economic crises to natural disasters and bloody wars that threaten international peace and stability, as well as other international issues that require timely resolutions and serious work from the

General Assembly to design strategies to avoid them in the future.

In our world today, known for its technological advancement and modern science, we are confronted by many challenges resulting from climate change, global warming and their effects, such as devastating floods, drought, forest fires, landslides, desertification, earthquakes, snow storms and so on. Such environmental problems have occurred recently in many countries, including the violent floods in Pakistan and China and the destructive forest fires in Russia, alongside other problems worldwide. We feel great compassion for the countries affected by these natural disasters, and we must cooperate with and provide them the assistance they need while we express our grief and condolences for their suffering.

A few centuries ago, the peoples of the world suffered from the horror of colonial slavery, injustice and oppressive cultures in which the strong preyed on the weak, as well as from horrific wars that spared nothing. It was through the collective will of victorious nations around the world that this fine institution was established in 1945 in order to ensure lasting peace and security and to protect human rights, the sovereignty of nations and the rights of people to self-determination, as well as justice, freedom of thought and expression.

However, 65 years since its inception, we must ask ourselves whether the world is more secure or nations are more at peace with one another. Has humankind attained its ambition of a good life, development and sustainable prosperity? The answer, clearly, is no. We see destructive wars being fought throughout the world, causing the suffering of millions, as well as the horrors of global terrorism, especially in the developing world.

Somalia is the weaker link in this scenario and therefore suffers from the worst kinds of international terrorism perpetrated, inter alia, by Al-Shabaab, Al-Qaida and the foreign criminal elements supporting them. Al-Qaida boasted of its responsibility for the horrible acts that occurred in Mogadishu on 3 December 2009 at the Benadir University graduation ceremony, where many graduating doctors died at a time when the country needed them most. Professors, ministers, families and guests also died at that ceremony.

Other heinous acts include the explosion at the Muna Hotel, the African Union headquarters in Mogadishu, as well as the explosion in Kampala, Uganda, which killed over 70 innocent people who had come to watch the World Cup match that was then taking place in South Africa.

These beastly massacres carried out by Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaida terrorists turn the stomach of any person with a conscience. This movement carries out such acts in Mogadishu and other Somali cities on a daily basis, in plain public sight and in places of worship, killing Somali civilians, hacking off their limbs, hands and ears and cutting their throats. It has also carried out unspeakable crimes against humanity, such as cutting off the heads of victims and disposing of them somewhere else. It has also committed rape and theft and caused great damage to property.

This movement does not believe in Somalia as a nation and does not support the creation of a national Government in Somalia; rather, it seeks to establish the Horn of Africa as a terrorist hub that is managed by its Al-Qaida partners and whose intention is to wreak havoc on the entire region and the world beyond.

Besides terrorism on land, another type of terrorism — piracy, perpetrated by pirates and extremist movements in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean — threatens navigation and sea trade. Maritime terrorism is no less dangerous than land-based terrorism; many United Nations Member States have had their ships hijacked by pirates who attack merchant or passenger vessels and then blackmail them and demand millions in ransom. While military convoys attempt to protect shipping in the Indian Ocean, they are unable to uproot this ongoing threat or eliminate its root causes.

There is a close connection between those pirates and armed extremist elements in Somalia. Such ships can be destroyed at any time and their crews killed rather than be held for ransom. All of this, again, requires a solution to the problems in Somalia, because the root causes of these problems lie not at sea but on land. No partial solution to the problems of Somalia can succeed no matter how strong and effective it is; only a comprehensive solution of these problems will work.

The President returned to the Chair.

I would also like to draw attention to a phenomenon even more dangerous to the Somalis in the long term than piracy. This is illegal fishing and the dumping of toxic waste along the Somali coast, which harm the health of Somalia's citizens and its environment. We have already begun to see symptoms and illnesses that did not previously exist in Somalia.

One function of the General Assembly is to deal with hotbeds of tension and threats to international peace and security. I therefore appeal to world leaders to stand together in confronting the threat of international terrorism, including Al-Qaida and Al-Shabaab, as well as organized crime. We must eliminate this scourge so that it will not expand and worsen and bear in mind that any delay or compromise will provide further opportunities for terrorism, prolong its life and allow it to spread. Beyond this, we need to solve the political, economic and social root causes of terrorism locally, regionally and internationally.

After many years of dispute and conflict, the Somali parties met in Djibouti and reached an agreement, endorsed by the international community, that led to the creation of a broad-based national Government that included all the conflicting parties who participated in the Djibouti peace conference. This Government has inherited a heavy burden and many challenges and obstacles, but it has managed to shoulder those responsibilities. However, it continues to wage a bitter struggle against such hostile elements as Al-Qaida and its allies, Al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam.

Here, we should note that the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), while only in its second year, has managed to counter and repel these enemy attacks and to achieve reconciliation and several agreements with members of Hizbul Islam and Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a. Thus the TFG has achieved some success in its goals, especially following its recent ministerial change, which brought in members of Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a, who have been assigned important ministerial positions in the new Government. I note that the national reconciliation achieved in Djibouti remains a strategic choice for us, and we reach out to all those who desire peace and security in Somalia.

We have also formed strategic plans in the areas of politics, security and social reform. We must produce a public budget for 2010 that covers economic, political and social affairs and State management expenses, as well as reconstruction. We must rehabilitate Government ministries and institutions and economic structures, such as the central bank, and encourage a free-market economy. We must provide food and humanitarian assistance to the needy and those displaced by river floodings, drought or desertification. This plan has been particularly difficult to implement because the Al-Shabaab movement has blocked the distribution of humanitarian aid and food to the areas it controls, and has raided and stolen from aid organizations and hijacked vehicles carrying food intended for the hungry.

We must further create opportunities to empower young people to play leadership roles, and furnish them with the skills necessary to manage Government institutions. We need to increase the skills and abilities of Government employees and foster a spirit of sacrifice for the homeland and devotion to work and transparency in conducting the country's business. We must build capacity in the security sector and train police and security forces to protect the Somali people and their independence and territorial integrity. We need to prepare a permanent constitution that can serve as the foundation for law, democracy and the guarantee of basic human freedoms. The constitution will be submitted for a referendum so that it can be applied as soon as possible. We must revitalize our judicial institutions and train judges and legal assistants, as well as reconstruct and rehabilitate support centres such as police stations, criminal courts and prisons. We should create an environment conducive to dialogue, reconciliation, negotiation and collective work, and halt the continuing violence in Somalia, which has lasted more than two decades now, so that peace and security can be restored. Finally, we must end the internal disputes that continue to erupt within our national institutions — for instance, among members of Parliament — and resolve them peacefully.

These are but a few of the issues that we have selected from among the many on which our strategic plans are focused. However, a shortage of funds, resources and expertise hinders the TFG from implementing many of them. From this rostrum, I appeal to the world's leaders and the international community to continue to come forward to help us stop the bloodshed in Somalia and to provide us with the

emergency assistance necessary to save our citizens and Government, especially in the following areas.

First, in the field of security, the Somali security forces need to be armed and trained in an effective way so that they are capable of taking the security initiative in their country, and provided with the salaries and health care they need if they are to protect citizens and establish Government authority throughout the country.

Second, the African Union forces in Somalia must be strengthened and reinforced by the addition of new forces.

Third, a military strategy must be designed and implemented by the United Nations, including the dispatch of an international force to Somalia with the purpose of restoring security and stability throughout the country.

Fourth, the Security Council should adopt resolutions aimed at saving Somalia and liberating it from Al-Qaida and any other terrorist movements that conspire against the restoration of peace and security there. On the political front, we would also ask for continued United Nations support for the TFG, allowing it to remain a focal point for reconciliation between the various parties in Somalia and the international community. The TFG should also be given the support it needs to discharge its duties and manage its budget, so that it can stand on its own two feet and carry out its economic projects and extend its authority throughout the country.

Fifth, the Somali Government should be assisted in rebuilding the infrastructure that was destroyed in the civil wars.

Sixth, the international community should participate and assist in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Somali State institutions, such as schools, hospitals and educational centres.

Seventh, the Somali economy must be promoted and its faltering institutions developed.

Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to the international community for its assiduous efforts to restore peace and stability in Somalia. Nevertheless, I would like to point out that all that has been offered to date is still not commensurate with what Somalia deserves. Somalia is a country that has lost everything, including its State infrastructure. We hope that the international community will assume its humanitarian responsibility towards our country and assist in ending its suffering, which has now entered its twenty-first year. It is also our hope that the international community will fulfil its promises and turn its resolutions and recommendations — past and present — into actual, implementable deeds.

I would especially like to thank the Governments of Uganda and Burundi, which have sent their troops to Somalia to bring peace to the situation there. I would also like to thank the Governments of the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the European Union and the brotherly Arab States, as well as the African Union, all of which have contributed to security and stability in my country. Our thanks also go to the international and regional organizations, including the United Nations, for their support. We hope that we will all succeed in restoring security and stability very soon because the continued suffering of the Somali people is unacceptable.

In conclusion, I pray to God that the efforts of this session of the General Assembly will be crowned with success and that Somalia will attend the next session having resolved its chronic crisis.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Silajdžić: It is an honour to address the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. Allow me to express my gratitude to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki for having ably presided over this body during the past year and to congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss on being elected the new President of the General Assembly.

Fifteen years ago, the Dayton Peace Agreement ended the aggression in and brought peace to Bosnia and Herzegovina. My country has come a long way since then, and I feel obliged to thank the Governments, organizations and individuals who assisted us in travelling down this road.

When we asked the General Assembly to support us in becoming a member of the Security Council, it honoured us with almost unanimous support, for which we offer our thanks. That support demonstrated that the Assembly holds Bosnia and Herzegovina in high esteem, and we are proud of that. As a member of the Security Council, we are doing our best to meet the Assembly's expectations and honour its trust.

Thanks to the generous assistance of many Governments represented here, Bosnia and Herzegovina completed the main process of reconstruction relatively quickly, particularly in the light of the level of devastation. But the rebuilding of our devastated society has proved to be much more difficult. From 1992 to 1995, an age-old, genuinely multicultural society in Bosnia and Herzegovina was brutally and intentionally torn apart by force. Half of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina had to leave their homes in order to save their lives. Some 1,300,000 of them remain outside Bosnia and Herzegovina. Systematic obstructions were the cause of failure of return programmes, and they are still an obstacle to those who want to return. Those who made it back to their homes are often confronted with blockade walls or with outright violations of basic rights. That makes the restoration of our pluralist society the single most difficult task ahead of us.

But hope remains that the upcoming constitutional changes will lay a foundation for the new generation to be able to bridge the divides. No matter what, we will continue to revive the pluralist character and tolerant spirit of our society because we strongly believe that cultural pluralism is humankind's most precious treasure.

A healthy economy can be a powerful tool for achieving that goal. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country rich in water and other energy-generating resources. We have undertaken studies and invited international investors to participate in developing these resources. Once completed, these projects will be the driving engine of our economy, enabling us to make progress in other areas, such as health care and social services.

We continue to develop our infrastructure and agricultural resources, but not at a desirable pace. Although generally improved, our education system remains in some aspects hostage to divisive political influences. On the other hand, our rising trade activities have resulted in improving our relations with the countries in the region, and great opportunities can be unlocked through more intensive and more confident regional cooperation.

As is the case in other societies, our greatest resource is our youth, educated in our country and abroad, and ready to take over once our economy is able to absorb their skills and talents. I am confident that, in the coming years, employment opportunities will grow in proportion to the development of the vast untapped resources of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Defence reform is commonly seen as one of our greatest post-Dayton successes because it resulted in unified, modern armed forces. Here again, we have to express our appreciation to our friends and allies whose assistance made this achievement possible. In a short amount of time, our armed forces have managed to earn the trust and respect of the United Nations through their participation in peacekeeping missions.

Like everywhere else, the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina desire peace, stability and prosperity, as well as a better future for themselves and their children. There is great potential for development, and opportunities are there to be seized. Yes, there are reasons for optimism, but there are reasons for concern too.

Our progress is hindered by the remnants of those who still believe in the completion of the political project that brought catastrophe not only to Bosnia and Herzegovina, but to the whole region. In short, they think that the world has forgotten the atrocities committed against the civilian population, the concentration camps, the rape camps and the genocide. After hundreds of thousands of non-Serb civilians were killed and expelled from one part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, they are now publicly calling for the

secession of that part. They hope and dream, as they say, that the world will somehow recognize that entity as an independent State. Instead of feeling shame, these disciples of Milošević, Karadžić and Ratko Mladić are now ready to come and ask the international community to reward the genocide in Srebrenica, Prijedor, Zvornik, Sarajevo, Mostar and other sites of horrific crimes for which Karadžić is now being tried at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the Hague. What a monument to inhumanity that would be!

Of course, they will not succeed. They can no longer count on the mighty armies of Slobodan Milošević because those armies were defeated through our heroic struggle. They do count on, as they say, favourable geopolitical circumstances. But they fail to take one thing into account, as Milošević did. Bosnia will be defended.

They will, however, continue obstructing progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and they will continue destabilizing the region. They found inspiration in the inadequate response of the international community, whose patience they have been testing for the past 15 years. So, our collective resolve to prevent the escalation and opening of fresh wounds in Bosnia and Herzegovina is being tested again. We must not fail this time.

This dangerous adventurism aside, I believe and I know that the train of progress cannot and will not be stopped. There is no doubt in my mind that Bosnia and Herzegovina and our entire region will maintain stability and achieve prosperity in the coming years, thus fulfilling the dreams and desires of every one of our citizens.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly I wish to thank the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Haris Silajdžić, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Mr. Borut Pahor, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia.

Mr. Borut Pahor, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Borut Pahor, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Pahor (Slovenia): I am indeed honoured to address this Assembly for the first time as Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia. I reaffirm my country's commitment to the United Nations and its Charter.

Let me also congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. We all rely on your political wisdom and experience, and I assure you of my country's utmost support in the coming weeks and months.

In the past few years, numerous national leaders have spoken in this very Assembly about new global challenges that threaten our security, prosperity and freedom. There is a general consensus that more effective and coordinated global action is required to address such challenges. For Slovenia, strengthening global governance means renewing our common commitment to multilateralism and its principles of inclusion, legitimacy and transparency.

The United Nations must keep its place at the core of global governance structures. However, this Organization also needs to adapt to the contemporary reality of an interconnected world and the resulting new challenges and threats. As many of my colleagues have already said, reform of the United Nations has been long undervalued. The composition of the Security Council is visibly out of date and the work of the General Assembly needs revitalization. Progress in peacekeeping reform would strengthen all other United Nations activities relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, including preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peacebuilding.

The reforms of international economic and financial systems must continue at an accelerated pace, reflecting global development needs. Our endeavours should aim at increasing accountability, responsibility and solidarity, while taking into account the need for a

stronger voice for and better participation of developing countries, which should be fully included in the international response to the crisis. Together, we must build a world in which economic indicators are not the only measure of a prosperous society. Human, social and environmental values should also become principal elements of our criteria. In this connection, I encourage closer cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions and between the United Nations and the Group of 20 in finding the best possible responses to the crisis and in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable.

It is unfortunate that, as a result of far-reaching developments, we continue to face an even greater challenge in climate change. Indeed, the past year has been a year of lost opportunities. However, this should not be a reason to lower our ambitions. Climate change is real, the loss of biodiversity is unprecedented and the consequences are already being felt by far too many people around the world. In some cases, the very existence of individual countries, States Members of the United Nations, is at stake. This year, we must do better and do more in Cancún to reach a comprehensive post-2012 climate agreement that will limit global warming to below 2°C, as stated in the Copenhagen Accord, and improve adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change. Our responsibilities differ, but we must all shoulder our share of the common burden.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the countries of Western Europe decided to open their ranks to the States of Central and Eastern Europe. This decision was instrumental in building a modern Europe of key democratic values. The choice of enlargement of Euro-Atlantic institutions was thus a choice for stability on the continent.

Unfortunately, the financial and economic crisis and international debates in many European States pushed aside some of the topics that are important and of strategic interest to the continent as a whole. The need for a continued process of enlargement of the European Union and NATO is one of them. I would therefore like to underline that the commitment to enlargement to the Western Balkans needs to be honoured, and all the more so since the situation in the region today has changed for the better. Obvious and tangible progress has been made.

In this connection, I would like to recall that only a couple of weeks ago this Assembly adopted resolution 64/298 by consensus, acknowledging the content of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which was rendered in response to a submitted request on the issue of the declaration of independence of Kosovo. I am particularly glad that the resolution paved the way for dialogue, which the European Union is ready to facilitate. It is the historic responsibility of the democratically elected leaders of the countries of the Western Balkans to pursue reconciliation and the rebuilding of mutual trust.

In order to promote the necessary confidence, I therefore decided, together with the Prime Minister of Croatia, to launch the so-called Brdo process several months ago in Slovenia. I think the results and consequences of this decision have so far been very good. Our aim is to encourage dialogue and cooperation among the political leaders with a view to discussing mutual support and further steps on the road to the Euro-Atlantic integration of the entire region. I believe that we are on the right track, and we will continue to work in this direction.

Slovenia plays an active role in the international community and takes its responsibilities seriously. I would therefore like to confirm once again our dedication to our candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, for the period of 2012-2013, at the elections to be held next year in this Assembly. Slovenia views its candidature as an opportunity to contribute further to the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as the peaceful settlement of disputes. We intend to build on our international commitments and experience gained in recent years. We are committed to upholding the rule of law, respect for human rights, international law and international humanitarian law, and we continue to foster open and transparent international dialogue in the spirit of cooperation and consensus-building.

Our candidature therefore underscores the great significance Slovenia attaches to the role of the United Nations in an increasingly interdependent and complex world. Furthermore, it indicates Slovenia's desire to utilize its rich multilateral experience to enhance the goals and principles of this universal, international Organization.

Finally, let me say once more how honoured I am, as the Prime Minister of Slovenia, to be present in this Assembly. Extraordinary historical circumstances have shaped the development of my country, which

therefore attaches great importance to the constant promotion of the noble purposes and principles of international relations, as defined in the Charter of the United Nations. I am therefore all the more pleased to have been able to participate in the general debate devoted to the reaffirmation of the central role of this Organization in global governance.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Borut Pahor, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. José Socrates, Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic.

Mr. José Socrates, Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. José Socrates, Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Socrates (Portugal) (*spoke in Portuguese; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): I wish to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly. The Assembly is the central body of the United Nations architecture. Here, all Member States are truly represented and each has a vote, irrespective of its size, population or economic power. Here is where the central decisions that determine the functioning of the other bodies are made. Here, we are all permanent members, embodying the principle of the sovereign equality of all States.

Here in the General Assembly, Portugal is guided by the objective of doing its best to strengthen the United Nations. There are no true alternatives to the Organization. Its unique role in managing international relations is more evident than ever, and it is our duty to further enhance this role in order to attain a progressive and solid strengthening of the United Nations. I repeat, there are no alternative mechanisms to the United Nations. For this reason, all Member States should work to reinvigorate the Organization.

Portugal is guided by the principles of national independence, respect for human rights, equality among States, peaceful solutions to conflicts and international cooperation as the main elements that drive development and the progress of humankind. These principles are all inscribed in the Portuguese Constitution.

These are also the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Allow me to underline some of them, which today are more important than ever: maintaining international peace and security, the development and progress of all peoples, friendly relations among all nations based on sovereign equality, international cooperation in solving economic, cultural and humanitarian crises and the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The maintenance of international peace and security, is surely one of the noblest of our objectives. The Charter defines the way we, the United Nations, should act together to prevent or remove threats to peace and how to respond to acts of aggression or other violations of our universal principles.

Portugal has been an active contributor to United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations in Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania. Our efforts have always been global and generous. Tens of thousands of Portuguese have participated in peace operations. We are now present in places as diverse as Afghanistan, South Lebanon, Timor-Leste, the Western Balkans, Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

We participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations and other missions according to our means and, quite frequently, above and beyond what our size, would require. Nevertheless, we continue doing it with the firm conviction that collective security calls for collective efforts. Moreover, the United Nations can continue to count on the Portuguese contribution to this collective endeavour.

Looking at the present challenges to international peace and security, allow me to refer to the situation in the Middle East, a conflict involving many negative influences in the relations between several peoples and cultures. The coming year will be critical to the peace process. The choice is clear: peace or a return to instability.

We welcome the return to direct negotiations aimed at reaching a two-State solution. We all have to

join efforts for the creation of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side, in mutual peace and security, with the State of Israel.

I would also like to mention Afghanistan where the international community has assumed a firm commitment to support reconstruction and development. The results of the Kabul Conference will have to be complemented at the upcoming NATO summit in Lisbon, with a view to ensuring a sustainable transition process, mainly led by the Afghans themselves.

International peace and security require effective multilateral action among United Nations bodies. Effective multilateralism needs to be based on working structures with which every Member State feels comfortable. The United Nations is indispensable. It alone is capable of confronting global threats, it alone has the capacity to respond to acute natural disasters, as we have seen in several recent situations, like the Haitian earthquake or the Pakistan floods, and it alone can effectively shelter and feed millions of refugees worldwide, thanks to the outstanding work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, led by António Guterres, one of the most distinguished Portuguese political leaders.

It is especially urgent to reform the United Nations and to adapt it to today's international realities. Any reform must be based on the objectives that inspired its creation. Its pivotal place at the centre of the international architecture has to be preserved, for the United Nations is the only forum where no one feels excluded, the only body where all States, including small and medium-sized countries, have their own voice and their own say in solving global problems.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission — an idea put forward by Portugal — was a significant step in the reform process. But we also have to look at the Security Council with a view to its enlargement. I sincerely believe that we can all succeed in reshaping the Council and making it more representative, more efficient and more transparent.

Mr. Ould Hadrami (Mauritania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In our view, it is illogical that countries like Brazil or India, which have an irreplaceable role in today's international economic and political life, are still not permanent members of the Security Council.

Africa, as well, has to be considered in this enlargement of the permanent membership. It is of the utmost importance that Africa be fairly treated, given the remarkable political and economic progress we all have witnessed on that vast continent — continent with which Portugal feels a permanent affinity. It is only natural that we have been so closely linked to the strengthening of relations between Africa and the Europe Union (EU), having hosted the summit in Lisbon where the Joint Africa-EU Strategy was designed. We are now looking forward to the third Africa-EU summit.

The implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is urgent. Let me congratulate the Secretary-General and the members of the General Assembly on the results achieved at the recent High-level Meeting. We are firmly committed to applying the agreed political vision to mobilize efforts to meet the targets over the next five years.

International stability cannot be achieved and maintained without economic and social prosperity worldwide. The present economic and financial situation shows that we all benefit from common solutions to global problems. In this context, I call for a reinforced participation of developing countries and regional groupings and communities in ongoing debates, including the reform of the international financial organizations and their interaction with the United Nations system.

Another field where interdependence urges us to act jointly is climate change. It is a matter of survival. We shall do our part to ensure that the Cancún summit is a step in the right direction. Portugal has consistently worked to reduce its carbon footprint by investing solidly in renewable energy. I am proud to be able to announce that we have already met the target that my country announced here last year. Portugal is already producing 45 per cent of its electricity from local renewable sources, and by 2020 it intends to reach 66 per cent. It now holds the fifth place in Europe — and in the world — in terms of use of renewable energy. It has the largest wind park in Europe — and the second largest in the world — and it holds the record for the highest amount of wind energy

generated. It has the largest photovoltaic park in the world and is a leader in the area of electric vehicles. Portugal is now considered one of the 10 most promising countries for energy investment.

Portugal has been sharing this experience and this knowledge with a number of developing countries, and we continue to intensify this cooperation through concrete partnerships and technology transfer and knowledge, supporting efforts towards adaptation and mitigation, in accordance with the commitments made in Copenhagen. Some of our partners are least developed countries and small island developing States. They are among those that pollute the least but suffer the most from climate change. It is urgent that the international community take the necessary measures to reduce their vulnerability.

This year marks the beginning of the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification. Portugal recognizes the right to water, as well as the right to education, adequate housing and health. Ensuring that every human being has access to drinking water and adequate sanitation is also a good way of accelerating the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

My country, an independent State for almost 1,000 years, commemorates this year the centennial of the Portuguese Republic. We are today a democracy with solid credentials in terms of human rights and their promotion worldwide. We firmly believe in the rule of law and have learned through our own experience that peace and prosperity are attainable only when they are truly and freely shared by all States.

Portugal is also a country that is accustomed to listening to its partners. We are members of the European Union, the Atlantic Alliance, and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, currently presided over by Angola, which I congratulate. Portuguese is the fifth most widely spoken language in the world and is present on all continents. Portugal also participates in the Alliance of Civilizations, a forum that is at the forefront of the much-needed intercultural dialogue among regions, which is ably led by Jorge Sampaio, former President of my country.

Portugal's action at the United Nations is rooted in our capacity for open dialogue with every Member State and in our ability to build bridges and forge consensus. We always seek to defend our values through dialogue, not by imposing our views. Our attitude is not driven by any temporary need to please some constituencies. We aspire to be judged by our actions. This is our motivation for seeking active participation in all United Nations bodies for which the composition is rotational.

This universal vision of dialogue and openness to the world characterizes our current candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council.

We belong to the United Nations because we strongly believe in its values, objectives and universality; because we maintain that mutual respect should be the cornerstone of international action; and because we think that the strengthening of the United Nations and its activities is surely one of the most noble and idealistic objectives of all those who, like the Heads of State and Government participating here, strive each and every day to achieve a better world.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. José Socrates, Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Jan Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Mr. Jan Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Jan Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Balkenende (Netherlands): The Headquarters of the United Nations is currently undergoing a major renovation, and that is a good thing. It is good because the building no longer meets the requirements of the new century. In the meantime, work goes on as usual,

and here we all are, discussing the big issues of the day.

Of course, the parallel is obvious. The United Nations system itself has now reached a certain age and is also in need of renovation. And in this sense, too, the day-to-day work of the United Nations must go on, for we cannot afford to take a break from tackling the global problems we face. The United Nations may be under renovation, but it still has to stay open for business.

It was 65 years ago that the United Nations was established in San Francisco. There, and at Bretton Woods, the world's leaders laid the foundations for a multilateral system that would be built upon the smoking ruins of the Second World War. This system has demonstrated its usefulness, but it is based on post-war realities, not on the international balance of power and the global problems of today.

I use the word "renovation", because we do not need to build from scratch. Over the past 65 years, the system has more than proved its worth. There is nothing wrong with the foundations or the basic structure. Besides, experience has taught us that a practical step-by-step approach is a more effective way to reform a large organization than reliance on a "big-bang" strategy. Or, as Dag Hammarskjöld, one of the great leaders of the United Nations, put it, "Constant attention by a good nurse may be just as important as a major operation by a surgeon".

Today, I would like to look briefly at three of the core tasks of the United Nations in order to show how the Dutch Government views various concrete reforms in practical terms. Those tasks relate to human rights, the international legal order, and peace and security. Let me begin, however, with the background to these renovations, using my own experience as a guide, starting with the question of why they are necessary.

In human terms, 65 years is often an age at which we start to take things easier. Unfortunately, that is not an option for the United Nations, for despite all our efforts, peace, security, legal certainty and development are still not guaranteed for everyone. In fact, since the United Nations was established, the global challenges facing us have only grown larger. Consider the climate crisis, or the energy and food crisis, or the international economic crisis that has shown so clearly how closely connected everything is in our time. We need each other more than ever before, and we need the United Nations as the organization uniting us more than ever before.

In this light, I applaud the choice of theme for this sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly: "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance" — although I must confess I would have replaced the word "reaffirming" with "recovering", because ground has clearly been lost, as has become especially apparent in the last few years. The Group of 20, and not the United Nations, has taken the lead in tackling the economic crisis, for example. The United Nations Climate Change Conference could have delivered more if the world had been able to unite behind the tough decisions. And where the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are concerned, we see mixed results. A lot has been achieved, but on some Goals we are lagging far behind, thanks to a fragmented and defective international aid architecture. We discussed this earlier in the week at the MDG summit.

What these examples show is that the United Nations is losing its position — and its convening power — as the obvious global platform for discussion and decision-making. It pains me to say that. However, I also have every faith that the United Nations can continue in the future to claim its vital role as the world's overarching governance organization.

In my view, the end of the cold war freed the United Nations from a long period of confrontation and stagnation. In its wake the international agenda was redefined with great speed and vigour. Relatively new topics like the environment and climate change, social themes and gender issues began to claim our attention. The international legal order was strengthened by new international tribunals, the International Criminal Court and a growing number of peace missions under the United Nations flag — and of course, in setting the MDGs at its Millennium Summit (resolution 55/2), the United Nations showed how ambitious it can be.

The United Nations is only able to achieve such things because every country is involved and everyone has a voice. That is the power of the United Nations, but also its greatest weakness. Inclusion does not only foster legitimacy — the unique selling point of the United Nations. It also leads to sluggish decision-making, politicized relationships and a bureaucratic structure that lacks transparency. I believe that anyone

familiar with the international circuit over the past 10 years will recognize this picture.

It is often said, "If the United Nations did not exist it would have to be invented" — and indeed, a global organization with universal membership is essential. Still, no matter how representative an organization may be, it will lose its relevance if it does not deliver sufficient results. In short, legitimacy and effectiveness are two sides of the same coin.

The Dutch Government is convinced that the United Nations can improve its effectiveness and decisiveness and so increase its legitimacy and public support. This can be done by utilizing the United Nations and its process to solve problems and by putting practical considerations first when problems are tackled. The Netherlands wants to see that happen and will work to make it happen. We will do so as a founding Member of the United Nations but also together with our partners in the European Union, of which we also are a founding member. The European Union is strongly committed to the United Nations, and we subscribe to its contributions to secure the future of the United Nations.

That brings me to the first of the three core tasks I mentioned at the start of my speech: human rights. This, without question, is an area in which the United Nations has achieved great success in setting standards, with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as an unshakeable basis. Unfortunately, though, it still falls short in enforcing those standards. We still hear reports every day of torture, unfair trials, curbs on freedom of expression and other human rights violations. The Dutch Government considers it unacceptable that people, often women, are still being stoned to death in 2010. We must continue to resist this practice with every ounce of our being.

The Dutch Government urges that the capacity of the human rights machinery, and particularly the Human Rights Council, be strengthened. To start with, a clear division of tasks between the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of this General Assembly is needed. Overlap and lack of clarity make it too easy for some regimes to distract attention from human rights violations. The Netherlands will press for clarity.

Of course, human rights are closely related to the international legal order, the second area I want to touch on. As you know, this is a subject very close to the Netherlands' heart. The city of The Hague is not only the centre of Dutch democracy, it is also known as the legal capital of the world — and we are proud of that. More important, though, of course, is the fact that the international institutions based in The Hague are sending a clear message with the work they undertake. The international community will not allow human rights violations and crimes against humanity to go unpunished. That applies to the various ad hoc tribunals, such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. It also applies to the International Court of Justice and of course the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Over the last 20 years international criminal law has developed at an impressive rate. Today, those who commit the most terrible crimes, wherever in the world they may be, know that their chances of being called to account are growing by the day. Now we must act boldly. We must strengthen these institutions' visibility, credibility and authority. We can do that by improving international cooperation on investigations and prosecutions, by increasing compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and by pushing for as many countries as possible to sign the Rome Statute and to conduct themselves according to both its letter and its spirit. With that in mind, I say that it is unacceptable to the Dutch Government that someone like President Al-Bashir of the Sudan, against whom an arrest warrant is outstanding, should be allowed to move freely in a country that is an ICC partner.

In closing, I would like to say a few words about the broad topic of peace and security. At this moment, there are some 100,000 people taking part in United Nations peace missions around the world. So no one can deny that the United Nations plays a leading role in this area — and rightly so, because it is precisely in matters of war and peace that legitimacy and resolve are most essential. Such legitimacy and resolve can only be provided by the United Nations and the Security Council.

We saw only recently, in the incident involving the Republic of Korea's naval ship, the *Cheonan*, how difficult and shaky the position of the Security Council can sometimes be. On the one hand, the Council condemned the attack unanimously and in strong terms, and that has to be applauded. On the other hand, the Council remained silent on the question of blame, which is an extremely hard thing to bear for the survivors and the victims' loved ones.

It is precisely in order to guarantee the legitimacy and strength of the Security Council in the future that the Dutch Government continues to support reforms of the Council that reflect the geopolitical realities of today and not of 1945. Naturally, the exact substance of those reforms is still open to debate. But it is clear to the Netherlands that there should be more room for more countries to join the discussions and exert influence: room for large countries that in 1945 were not yet large enough or were not yet Members of the United Nations; but also room for smaller nations that, as troop-supplying countries or as interested parties in a particular region, should have the right to speak. I would add immediately that countries that want influence should realize that this entails financial, political and moral obligations. Or, in the words of Winston Churchill, the price of greatness is responsibility.

I have briefly sketched why the United Nations is in need of renovation. I hope I have made clear that its relevance is tied not only to its legitimacy but also to its effectiveness. And I have suggested the direction the renovation might take in three specific areas. One thing I have not yet done, however, is to reaffirm that the Netherlands, in keeping with its long international tradition, will continue to work for quality in the United Nations system. Together with others, together with all represented in this Hall, we will work in the knowledge that this renovation, like all our activities, requires us to pool our resources. Or, as the United Nations Charter says: "unite our strength" and "combine our efforts". Let those words inspire us in the work that lies ahead.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Jan Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister and Minister for General Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, Chair of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Chair of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority.

Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, Chair of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, Chair of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Abbas (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me pleasure to congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election to the presidency at this session and to wish him every success in fulfilling his important tasks. We would also like to convey through you, Sir, our thanks to His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki for his valuable efforts during his presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

We would like also to express our thanks and appreciation to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts in strengthening the role and work of the United Nations and its bodies in various fields. In particular, we greatly appreciate his efforts, and those of the United Nations entities, especially the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which continues to work to provide essential services to Palestinian refugees, who have been waiting for more than 60 years for redress of their plight and the realization of their right to return to their homes and properties.

I am well aware that the agenda of the General Assembly is filled with matters and issues of pressing concern to the entire human race and to our planet, particularly those relating to armed conflict, wars and the struggle of people under foreign occupation to realize their right to self-determination, as well as climate change, global warming, natural disasters and the global economic and financial crises.

All of this is happening at a time when we are witnessing rightful demands for the revitalization of the United Nations, particularly reform of the Security Council aimed at making it more representative and truly reflective of the current international situation. This is especially important in the light of the

emergence of new Powers, which should be represented in the Security Council in order to enhance its role and effectiveness in maintaining international peace and security.

There is also significant discontent over some States' non-compliance with Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. This demands that the international community take vigorous, effective measures to compel those countries to respect and implement these resolutions; to end colonization, occupation and exploitation in our world so as to promote the values of freedom, justice, tolerance and coexistence; and to combat extremism and terrorism. Indeed, the United Nations has a fundamental role to play in promoting cooperative relations among peoples and guiding them towards investment in the development of societies and infrastructure, as well as in fighting poverty, unemployment, desertification, disease and epidemics and the lethal human and environmental risks they pose for humanity and the future of our planet.

Our people, our homeland, Palestine, and our region, the Middle East, are facing extremely serious problems that continue to push them towards violence and conflict, wasting chance after chance to seriously address the issues faced by the peoples of the region and to arrive at comprehensive and bold solutions. This is the result of the expansionist and hegemonic mentality that still prevails in the ideology and policies of Israel, the occupying Power, whose standard policy is non-compliance with internationally legitimate resolutions, including those of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Such disrespect has rendered those resolutions ineffective, undermined the credibility of the United Nations and bolstered the prevailing view that double standards are in effect, particularly regarding the Palestinian question, and that Israel is a State above the law, flouting all these resolutions and engaging in oppression, arrests, detentions, killings, destruction, demolition of homes, blockades, settlement expansion and the establishment of the annexation apartheid wall, violating and undermining the existence and the rights of our people in their own homeland.

The ancient city of East Jerusalem, capital of the independent State of Palestine and designated by UNESCO as a world heritage site requiring protection, is being subjected by Israel, the occupying Power, to actions that alter and distort realities on the ground. Such actions destroy landmarks, cemeteries and the religious, spiritual and historical identity of the holy city in every aspect and as quickly as possible, aiming to erase its historical character and pre-empt final status negotiations. This is in addition to the continuous excavations under the Al-Aqsa mosque, the demolition of homes, the deportations and revocation of the residency rights of its population and the imposition of a siege on the city in an attempt to isolate it from its natural Palestinian Arab surroundings and to control it geographically and demographically.

This situation is a provocation to our people. It antagonizes them and gives rise to anger, especially in the Arab and Islamic world. It creates instability in our region and constitutes a serious obstacle to the achievement of peace and security. All of these illegal Israeli measures and practices must cease.

This is also the case with regard to the situation in the Gaza Strip, which has been subjected to an unjust, illegal and unprecedented land, air and sea blockade in violation of international law and United Nations resolutions. It is also the target of harsh Israeli military aggression that has severely damaged its infrastructure. This illegal blockade and aggression have resulted in the destruction of the infrastructure and productive capacity of Gaza and destroyed 25 per cent of its homes and nearly 75 per cent of its jobs, leading to widespread unemployment and dependence on international aid. The Israeli blockade is preventing our people in Gaza from rebuilding their homes, even though the international donor community has pledged some $5 billion to finance reconstruction. The blockade against the Gaza Strip must be lifted immediately and completely, and the tragic suffering being inflicted on our people there must be ended as soon as possible.

We welcome the efforts of the international independent fact-finding mission established by the Human Rights Council concerning the Israeli attack on the Freedom Flotilla, which was carrying humanitarian assistance for our people in the Gaza Strip. We welcome the conclusions reached by the mission, and we also look forward to the submission by the Panel of Inquiry established by the Secretary-General of its findings to the Security Council.

To all of this I must add the fact that thousands of Palestinian prisoners and detainees remain in Israeli jails and detention centres. They are all fighting for

freedom. They must be released and an end must be put to their suffering. This is essential for creating a positive environment for the attainment of peace. We cannot reach a peace agreement that does not liberate all of them from their chains and their imprisonment.

In spite of all of this and despite the historic injustice that has been inflicted upon our people, their desire to achieve a just peace that guarantees the realization of their national rights in freedom and independence has not and will not diminish. Our wounded hands are still able to carry the olive branch picked from the splinters of the trees that the occupation forces uproot every day. Our people aspire to live in security, peace and stability on their Palestinian national soil, to build the lives and future of our generations.

We are willing and ready to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, based on rights and justice and on the resolutions of international legitimacy. Such a settlement must lead to the withdrawal of Israel, the occupying Power, from all the Arab and Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, so that the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as their capital, can enjoy independence and sovereignty and so that peace can prevail throughout the Middle East.

Because of our genuine desire to attain a comprehensive peace in the region, we have decided to enter into final status negotiations. We will exert every effort to reach an agreement for Palestinian-Israeli peace within one year, in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, the Arab Peace Initiative, the road map and the vision of the two-State solution. On behalf of the Palestine Liberation Organization, we have reaffirmed our commitment to the option of just peace and our determination, seriousness and sincere intention to make these negotiations succeed, in spite of all the difficulties and obstacles before us.

The international community should draw lessons from the reasons for the faltering of the political process and the inability to achieve its goals in the past. Restoring the credibility of the peace process mainly requires compelling the Government of Israel to comply with its obligations and commitments. In particular, the Government of Israel must cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, especially in and around East Jerusalem; dismantle the apartheid annexation wall; and put an end to the policy of blockade and closures that restrict the lives and movement of our people and deprive them of their basic human rights.

Our demands for the freezing of settlement activities, the lifting of the blockade and an end to all other illegal Israeli practices do not constitute preconditions that are alien to the political process. Rather, they are consistent with the implementation of previous obligations and commitments which have been repeatedly reaffirmed in all the resolutions adopted since the start of the political process.

Israel's implementation of these obligations and commitments will lead to the creation of the necessary environment for the success of the negotiations and will give credibility to its pledge to implement the final agreement. Israel must choose between peace and the continuation of settlements.

From this rostrum, I reaffirm that we will continue, as we have always done, to make every possible effort so that these negotiations will achieve the desired objective of realizing peace by addressing all final status issues, namely Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, borders, water, security and the release of all prisoners and detainees. This must be done in a manner that will achieve freedom, independence and justice for the Palestinian people in their homeland, rectify the historical injustice inflicted upon them, achieve security and safety for all their neighbours, lead to a just peace throughout the Middle East, including on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, and thus usher in a new era of stability, progress, prosperity, coexistence and good-neighbourliness.

The political process will be put back on the right track only if the international community assumes the main responsibility for ending the Israeli occupation, the longest occupation in modern history; ensures our people's right to self-determination in their independent sovereign State based on the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital; and finds a just and agreed solution to the plight of the Palestinian refugees. This must all be carried out through the implementation of the principles of the Charter, the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, and the provisions of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, on the ground in the occupied

Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. All of these measures constitute the legitimate political terms of reference for any successful negotiation leading to a final peace settlement.

Our people, despite the profound and continued suffering they have endured, hold steadfast to their rights, their land and their national soil. At the same time, they are determined to restore national unity and the bonds between the two parts of our homeland. We are making every effort to restore unity through dialogue and the good, honourable efforts of our brothers and friends, especially the Arab Republic of Egypt. On our part, we will spare no effort to end the division resulting from the coup against Palestinian legitimacy and to establish democracy as an essential foundation of our body politic.

We will also assume our responsibility for building national institutions for our independent State and national economy, and for ensuring the security and safety of our citizens under a national authority based on the rule of law, accountability, transparency and justice. We will also continue to fulfil our obligations under the road map and the agreements reached between the two sides.

In conclusion, it is imperative in this context to express our appreciation to all those who have contributed to sponsoring and supporting the peace process. Here, I would like to express my special thanks to His Excellency Mr. Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, who affirmed in his statement before the Assembly (see A/65/PV.11) two days ago the two-State solution and the need to freeze settlement activities and establish the independent State of Palestine with full membership in the United Nations next year. On this occasion, we reaffirm our readiness to cooperate fully with his country's efforts for a successful political process to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the region.

We must also pay tribute to the United Nations for preserving our cause and extending a helping hand to our people through its resolutions and decisions, which constitute an unshakeable foundation for peace. From this rostrum, we call on the United Nations to continue its pivotal role until justice is upheld, our people have regained their usurped rights and peace prevails in our entire region. We reiterate our appreciation for the Organization's tireless efforts to stand in solidarity with the just cause of Palestine, and we reaffirm our faith in the peace to which we and all the peoples in the region aspire. We ask God to bless us with a future in which we will all enjoy peace, security and stability.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Chair of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, Chair of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Mr. Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Ould Mohamed Laghdaf (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate, on behalf of Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, and on my own behalf, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session and to wish him every success in his new duties. I have great confidence that his diligent efforts will have a positive impact on our Organization, as did those of his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, whose praiseworthy labours strengthened the ties of cooperation, the bonds of brotherhood, and the universal principles of peace and dialogue within the General Assembly.

It also gives me great pleasure to express my thanks and appreciation to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his serious efforts to achieve

the objectives of the Organization and to strengthen the pillars of peace, security and prosperity in the world.

Mauritania fulfilled its constitutional obligation by selecting Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz as President of the Republic through elections in which the Mauritanian people expressed their will freely, impartially and maturely. Today, for the first time in its history, my country has taken a comprehensive qualitative leap forward into a new era — which we call "the era of serious work" — to improve the living conditions of Mauritanian citizens, consolidate democracy and build a State that is on good terms with its citizens and its neighbours on the basis of justice, equality and the values of the Republic.

In this new era, there are no political prisoners in Mauritania and the pluralistic Parliament plays its full role in legislating and in supervising the Government. The press exercises its freedom without censorship or constraint, as do political parties, unions and civil society institutions.

Inspired by the electoral platform of President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, the Government of Mauritania has devoted itself to implementing an ambitious development policy with clearly visible goals, including the elimination of corruption and its consequences; the promotion and use of the country's resources in a rational, responsible and transparent manner; ensuring respect for the rule of law and the country's prestige; providing security throughout society; offering basic services, and constructing essential infrastructure needed for the country's development.

This policy has earned the confidence and support of Mauritania's brothers, friends and development partners, who, at their round table meeting in Brussels in June, blessed our ambitious development programme and pledged financial support totalling $3.2 billion over three years. In this regard, we thank them sincerely for having made every effort to ensure the success of the round table and for all their support for our development programmes.

In the course of implementing these programmes, Mauritania became a hub of activity as roads and health and education facilities were built and integrated projects established for the purpose of empowering women and youth in order to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country and to improve conditions for the poor and the marginalized, who rejoiced at the election of our President and have granted him the nickname "President of the poor" for his great devotion to and care for the people.

Mauritania, like other countries, is confronted with terrorism and transnational organized crime. Terrorism is a global phenomenon that is not tied to a particular country, continent, religion or society. Any attempt to conflate Islam with this phenomenon is rejected, unacceptable and illogical. Those most affected by terrorism are, after all, the Muslims and the Islamic world.

We believe that the fight against terrorism requires progress in social justice, the training of young people and their integration into an active life. This will give them hope so that they do not become easy recruiting targets for terrorists and extremist organizations.

My country is making diligent efforts on all these fronts and promoting the role of our prominent scholars to debate in the best possible manner and to provide the correct image of Islam, which is a religion of tolerance, virtue and acceptance of others and one that rejects excess and extremism. Moreover, Mauritania, far from being at war with anyone, as His Excellency the President of the Republic has repeatedly said, will spare no effort to maintain peace and security for its citizens and ensure the necessary conditions for the development of the country in security and stability.

The establishment of a united Arab Maghreb is a strategic option for the peoples of the region, and failure to maintain such unity will reflect negatively on the future of that vital region of the world. There is no doubt that finding a timely solution to the issue of Western Sahara and obtaining the consent of the parties concerned would contribute to accelerating the pace of integration of the united Maghreb and enable it to play its full role as an indispensable and effective regional partner.

On the other hand, conscious of the importance of the United Nations as an irreplaceable forum for the voices of Member States and other members of the international community, big and small, powerful and weak, as well as for resolving difficult international issues and coordinating and supporting development efforts, Mauritania supports efforts to reform the Organization and its organs, especially the Security Council.

We call for the expansion of the Council to include permanent representation for the African continent and the Arab Group, because democracy is an international requirement and not only a national practice or objective. Given their cultural, human and strategic significance, it is neither logical nor acceptable not to grant permanent seats on the Security Council to the African continent and the Arab world.

The Arab-Israeli conflict remains a source of tension and a threat to international peace and security in an extremely sensitive and vital area of the world. That region will know no stability until a definitive solution to the conflict is found. Such a solution must be just and permanent and in accordance with resolutions of international legitimacy. It must allow the brotherly Palestinian people to exercise their full right to establish their independent and viable State in Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital. It must also ensure the restoration of all occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan Heights and the Lebanese Shab'a farms.

Mauritania hopes that the direct negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis, sponsored by the United States, will conclude in tangible results and an acceptable time frame. There is no people in the Middle East that needs peace more than the Palestinian people. My country has called for the lifting of the unjust siege on Gaza and for an end to its collective and inhumane punishment. Restoring rights and justice to their owners and between nations and cultures is the best means to achieve peace and security in the world.

Before concluding, allow me to reiterate what I stated a few days ago — the development challenges before us all will be exacerbated unless we all assume our responsibilities and fulfil our commitments. Developing countries require the urgent attention of the international community if they are to achieve the stability, development and progress that will enable them to integrate into the global economic system.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Guido Westerwelle, Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. Westerwelle (Germany) (*spoke in German; interpretation provided by the delegation*): It is an honour for me to speak to the General Assembly today.

The world has changed dramatically since the United Nations was founded 65 years ago. International trade and exchange are, of course, nothing new. What is new, however, is how quickly the changes affect everybody's lives. Only if we in the United Nations are and remain able to act can we shape these global changes. We will manage to solve problems relating to security and economic, social and ecological development only if the international community stands united. Germany is ready to assume global responsibility within the framework of the United Nations.

Germany's foreign policy is firmly embedded in the international community. In Europe, a system of cooperation has replaced the confrontation that cruelly divided our continent for centuries. The European Union is successful because, in Europe, all peoples and States meet on an equal footing. The United Nations, too, brings together nations large and small, rich and poor, those that are more powerful and those with less influence. Cooperation between equals on an equal footing is our guiding principle also for work here at the United Nations. Each and every country must respect all others.

German foreign policy is a policy of peace. This autumn, Germany will stand for election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council because the Council is the ideal forum in which to cooperate in the cause of peace and development. Peace is more than the absence of war. In today's globalized world, people are just as vulnerable to the consequences of climate change, poverty and underdevelopment as they are to violence and oppression.

Climate change has a direct impact on each and every one of us. Countless people are already personally feeling its economic and social consequences. In their letter to the Security Council, the Pacific island States rightly warned us in no uncertain terms just how much climate change threatens everyone's security. Everyone must play their

part to protect the climate. In Germany, we have just adopted a forward-looking energy strategy. By the year 2050, 80 per cent of our electricity production will come from renewable sources. Germany has also pledged to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 40 per cent by the year 2020, compared to the 1990 baseline. Even now, we have reduced our carbon dioxide emissions by almost 30 per cent. We are pioneers in the field of climate protection. We are helping those who are now most adversely affected by climate change. We are particularly concerned about the fate of small island States.

Anyone who is serious about combating climate change has to build on innovation, new technologies and exchange. Developed and developing nations alike can profit from cooperation on future energies. Germany will contribute its technological expertise, for example, in the fields of renewable energy and energy efficiency. In this way, we are turning the challenge of climate change into an opportunity for fair development and enhanced cooperation. Climate policy is a cornerstone of any sustainable development policy. The recent summit on the Millennium Development Goals laid down the next steps forward in our global partnership for development.

Education is the key to development. Development needs education. Education protects people from discrimination and oppression. Education fights prejudice and thereby fosters peace. Education also creates products and markets; education is the path to prosperity. The true wealth of many nations is no longer found in their raw materials but in the minds of their people. Education is a human right. It is because education will determine whether societies succeed or fail in tomorrow's world that Germany is one of the major international partners for learning. By building on education, we are building bridges to the future for the young people of today.

The United Nations itself must also keep up with the pace of change. Today's world order is not properly reflected if Africa and Latin America are not permanently represented on the Security Council. Asia, too, rightly considers itself to be underrepresented. The entire continent, not just individual States, is developing at breathtaking speed. We take our partnerships seriously, both the old and the new. Germany, too, remains ready to assume greater responsibility.

Disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are not issues of the past but challenges of our time. Disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin. We have to do all we possibly can to ensure that weapons of mass destruction do not become the bane of globalization. Unlike the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons five years ago, this May's Review Conference was a success. If we work together to maintain this momentum, it will be in our power to ensure that this decade does not see a build-up of arms but becomes a decade of disarmament. A world without nuclear weapons is a long-term vision, but even a marathon begins with the first step.

There is now movement in the disarmament debate. The group of States founded here in New York on Wednesday to advance disarmament and arms control does not stand alone. For over 10 years, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva was not even able to agree on an agenda. That is not the way to live up to our shared responsibility. We met yesterday at the invitation of the Secretary-General to break the deadlock binding the Geneva Conference. Our world will be a more secure place when the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enters into force and the production of fissile material is ended once and for all.

German peace policy stands for the peaceful settlement of regional conflicts. Germany is doing its utmost to ensure that the direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians are a success. We will continue to strengthen the forces of reason and reconciliation. During this vital period for the peace process in particular, I urge both sides to refrain from taking any action that might block the path to peace. We condemn any form of violence that has the sole aim of torpedoing the peace talks. At the same time, we call for the moratorium on settlement construction to be extended. Lasting peace will be achieved only through a two-State solution, with Israel and a Palestinian State living peacefully side by side within secure borders.

Iran, like every other country, naturally has the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, the Tehran leadership itself has sown doubt about the civilian nature of its nuclear programme. Iran, by demonstrating openness and transparency, can allay that doubt. Our offer of dialogue still stands. It is now up to Iran to grasp our outstretched hand.

The conference aimed at establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, planned for 2012, will be a major opportunity to strengthen peace and security in the region. Germany is encouraging all countries in the region to take part to ensure that the conference is a success. We are committed to a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East.

Germany is one of the major supporters of a peaceful and secure Afghanistan. As we agreed in London and Kabul, we want to transfer security responsibility for the whole of Afghanistan to the Afghan Government by 2014. To make progress in that country, so long ravaged by war and civil strife, effective measures must be taken to prevent the violence. However, military means alone will not bring success. We favour a comprehensive approach and above all a political solution. All sides now need the courage and the stamina to engage in reconciliation.

The German Government assists when people anywhere in the world are struck by natural disasters and emergencies. However, a country's conscience is to be found in the hearts of its citizens. I am proud that my fellow Germans donate so generously at times of greatest need. Humanity and solidarity are global values; humanity and solidarity make no distinction based on skin colour or religious beliefs. When the tsunami devastated coastlines around the Indian Ocean, when the Haiti earthquake destroyed the work of decades, or just recently, when the horrific floods in Pakistan left havoc in their wake, we Germans shared the victims' pain and helped in the most heartfelt way possible. We will stand by Pakistan over the coming months and years to ensure that the country has a promising economic future.

We are working towards a peaceful order in the Sudan, now and after the referendum early next year. We are looking for ways of achieving stable conditions in Yemen and are particularly active in the Friends of Yemen group. We are working hard to combat piracy off the Horn of Africa and to bring peace and stability to Somalia.

Reconstruction efforts in devastated regions cannot bring success overnight. Similarly, for societies torn by war and civil strife, the route to life in dignity leads through peace and reconciliation. There can be true peace only when human rights are respected. For us, such principles as the rule of law, freedom of opinion, freedom of the press and respect for inalienable human rights are essential. The protection of human rights remains a task for all societies.

It is a fundamental tenet of the United Nations that women determine their own lives and help decide the fate of their countries. Ethnic or religious minorities enrich their societies. Tolerance is one of Germany's guiding principles. Everyone wins in the competition for the best ideas; in a clash of cultures, there can only be losers.

United Europe can make a valuable contribution on our continent and beyond. Germany is working to ensure that, in the future, the European Union shall cooperate even more closely with other regions in Latin America, Africa and Asia, and live up to its global responsibility. Germany is the third-largest development cooperation donor. We have practically recovered from the financial and economic crisis and are on the right track due to our robust economic growth. This strong economy makes Germany a strong global partner.

If all countries, small and large, work together, we will be able to master the pressing challenges of our world.

(*spoke in English*)

They can count on Germany. They can rely on Germany.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The beginning of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly coincides with the preparations of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), chaired by my country, to celebrate 50 years of achievements. During those years, the Movement has greatly helped to reinforce international and multilateral action under changing regional and international circumstances. The Movement's work over those years has demonstrated the ability of developing countries to contribute effectively to the maintenance of international peace and security, make progress in development, and promote human rights, basic freedoms and the furtherance of good governance at the international level.

This week's NAM ministerial meeting represents the point of departure for a major celebration, to be hosted by Indonesia in April or May 2011. The meeting will chart a clear and integrated future course, drawing on past achievements as an impetus for future endeavours. It will define the elements of the Movement's future commitment to greater openness towards and interaction with the international community, in the context of fairness and mutual interest, to ensure that the aspirations and hopes of our countries and peoples are met.

Egypt appreciates the main theme that the President proposed for discussion at this session. Global governance touches on many political, economic and social issues. Egypt believes that the elected organs of the United Nations should handle the principal tasks in that area. We must all ensure that the United Nations discharges such roles effectively and wisely.

In the political field, for example, it is no longer acceptable for permanent membership of the Security Council, the main organ entrusted with maintaining international peace and security, to continue to operate under obsolete rules of an era long past. Similarly, it is unacceptable for the work of the Council or its mechanisms to continue to be characterized by a lack of transparency or balance.

A serious approach to current historic challenges requires more balanced, conscious and responsible management of this core issue. The Security Council has made numerous grave mistakes, resulting in the loss of innocent lives. Many resolutions that have been blocked by the Council would have corrected the disparities, returned rights to victims and restored the confidence of world public opinion in the Council's performance and impartiality.

Turning to the economic sphere, we note that the United Nations, and even the key Bretton Woods international financial institutions, no longer lead in managing the top international economic issues. Other international bodies are now beginning to assume that role.

At its summit last year, the Group of 20 declared itself the forum to coordinate global economic policy. Such a development prompts us to be cautious of its repercussions, since that forum or any other assuming such a responsibility should have the geographical representation necessary to ensure the fair airing of all trends and approaches prevailing in the international community. It must also ensure fair participation in formulating policy and in providing a balanced approach to current challenges. Marginalization is no longer acceptable. Countries of the South have rights and must have a voice and participate in any forum that deals with the international situation.

Egypt will continue its tireless work to achieve the wider and more balanced participation of the developing world in international economic decision-making. Our world has experienced successive years of poor economic performance and stubborn crises. That has aggravated the current inequities and heightened the challenges faced by all countries, developing countries in particular. It requires us all to support coordinated and joint action to address the shortcomings and inequities and to achieve sustainable and balanced global growth.

In that context, we welcome the outcome of the recent High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, at which the delegation of Egypt expressed its view on the Goals and the extent to which we will be able to achieve them. We hope that the conclusions of the summit will provide us with the necessary momentum to speed up the achievement of the Goals ahead of the final review in 2015.

The fact that Egypt is part of the Islamic world is common knowledge. We feel the pain of Muslims wherever they are. We share their joys and celebrations; we grieve with them and we feel their pain. There is no doubt that regrettable and appalling incidents against Muslims and Islam are increasingly frequent, and systematic in certain cases. They have ranged from attacks on the symbols and sanctities of the faith to the harassment of Muslims. In general, we find the West being drawn into a clash with the Muslim world. Such a clash would serve no one except extremists and those who hold perverse ideas on both sides. It would not be in the interest of security and stability in the world. It would not be in the interests of moderates. In such a clash, the winner is a loser and the victor is defeated.

Need I remind this gathering of the need for coordinated action among the influential advocates of religious, civilizational and cultural moderation in order to eliminate the threat before it becomes more ominous and destroys much of everything? We can no

longer accept pretexts to condone practices against Islam and its followers — such as the right to freedom of expression — which are surprisingly naïve, excessive in essence and offensive in nature.

Egypt will continue to do its utmost at the political, cultural and religious levels to address such threats. We call on all countries, in particular Governments, to play their part in highlighting the potential horror of a terrible clash of faiths and civilizations. We call on them to spread a culture of enlightenment based on tolerance, respect for differences and the renunciation of fanaticism, hatred and zealotry. Laws must be enacted to protect minorities and their beliefs from the aggression of extremists and promoters of strife.

With regard to matters of international peace and security, disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are priorities on Egypt's agenda. Only a few months ago, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons successfully concluded its work. It adopted an important document on the Middle East that included an action plan and measures to implement the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. Egypt will closely follow all steps taken to implement that plan, including the serious preparations for the 2012 conference.

Once again, let me reiterate Egypt's position that adopting double standards on the question of non-proliferation will result in a continued threat to world stability. In the Middle East particularly, we note increasing efforts to add to the commitments of non-nuclear-weapon States that are signatories to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, while the need for the Treaty to become universal in our region and for all nuclear installations in the Middle East to be subjected to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency is disregarded. This uncomfortable situation is a source of concern to us. We will work with all like-minded parties to address and redress this situation in relevant international forums.

Year after year, we return to the United Nations to debate the question of Palestine and the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict. Every year, our words swing between the hope for a complete but unrealized breakthrough, and the fear of a deterioration and an explosion that would compound the pain and suffering of the Palestinian people and aggravate the dangers of overreaching extremism, militancy and violence faced by our region.

This year is no different. It is true that there is hope in the wake of the start of direct negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides; however, chances for success remain slim. Despite the agony of the road to negotiations, Egypt believes that their relaunch may represent an important opportunity that should not be squandered.

It is important for the Israeli side to realize that negotiations are not an end in themselves. They are neither a game nor a waste of time. A serious approach must be the basis and distinguishing mark of the negotiating process. Without the required seriousness and credibility, the process will soon lose the little support it enjoys from the public on both sides. Egypt believes that these negotiations should seek to end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the implementation of the two-State solution through the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital and its borders based on the lines of 1967, as has been confirmed by the United States, the sponsor of the negotiations, and the international Quartet on all occasions and mentioned by President Obama a few days ago.

During the first round of negotiations in Washington, D.C., and later in Sharm el-Sheikh, we heard Israel's assurances of its commitment to the required seriousness. Therefore, we call on the Israeli side to take the difficult and necessary decisions, as President Mubarak said two days ago, to achieve a just political settlement that would allow the peoples and countries of the region to transcend decades of conflict, victimization and wasted resources.

There is no doubt that a freeze in Israeli settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territories has become a major factor in determining the intentions of the Israeli side and its level of commitment to the success of the negotiations. Should Israel fail in its commitment to prolong the moratorium on its settlement activities, it would expose the negotiation process to collapse and bear full responsibility before regional and world public opinion, as well as the sponsor, for wasting a valuable opportunity afforded by a major United States effort. Israel would also bear responsibility for any negative consequences. Were Israel to pass this test, we would look forward to a quick resolution by both parties of

the question of borders between them. The solutions in this respect are known to all. Settling the matter of borders would enable us to take important steps towards settling the conflict as a whole.

Egypt also supports any serious effort to resume direct negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks in a way that would allow both countries to regain their occupied territories and consequently reach a comprehensive peace, implement the Arab Peace Initiative and end the Arab-Israeli conflict once and for all.

Brotherly Sudan is currently facing the most difficult juncture since its independence. In addition to developments in Darfur, the referendum on self-determination for Southern Sudan is drawing near. Egypt follows this situation with the greatest interest, given our common border with that country. Our interest is based not only on the close brotherly relations between our two peoples, but also on our anticipation of any possible consequences of the referendum. Egypt will pursue its efforts to preserve the unity of the Sudan as long as that is the choice of the majority in that country. But if the wish of the Southern Sudanese, who are also our brothers, were any different, Egypt would respect the outcome and work with all parties in the interests of development and stability.

The security of the Arab Gulf is one of Egypt's major concerns and foreign policy priorities. Apart from our age-old relations, Egypt understands that it is of strategic importance for its Arab brethren in the Gulf. Egypt will therefore continue to work with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries for the maintenance of Arab national security in the region and to ensure that any security arrangements reached are in consonance with the requirements and concerns of Arab countries.

Egypt affirms the urgent need to reach a political settlement on the Iranian nuclear issue, especially since its dangerous escalation would threaten an eruption of the situation that could endanger peace and stability in that vital region of the world. While it is true that threats against a State member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference are not acceptable, we nevertheless ask Iran to refrain from any measure that could exacerbate the situation in the region, and specifically in the Gulf area, and lead to a confrontation with different forces in the international community. All parties must adhere to negotiations as a way to a peaceful, political settlement of this issue. Such a settlement would guarantee Iran's legitimate right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and enable the international community to verify that Iran is in compliance with its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. No evidence has yet been seen to suggest otherwise.

The southern strait of the Red Sea is an area of strategic importance for Egypt. It leads to the Suez Canal, a vital waterway at the centre of the world. Securing this critically important area is at the heart of Egyptian interests. On that basis, Egypt has participated extensively in all international efforts to combat piracy off the Somali coast and in the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. Egypt has also provided support to some countries of the region in areas such as the development of coast guard capacity, raising awareness about the prevention of piracy, and the implementation of a media and communications strategy to combat piracy. In the same vein, continued fratricidal fighting in Somalia has consequences for stability in the Horn of Africa and, as such, remains a source of concern to us.

Egypt is pursuing its efforts, including in outreach, to further raise international interest in Somalia with a view to achieving a ceasefire and proceeding to a comprehensive and peaceful political settlement. Such a settlement will be conditional on the existence of the political will of the Somali parties to achieve peace and on the commitment of external parties to refrain from interfering in Somali affairs while seriously participating in efforts to achieve a political settlement.

In conclusion, Egypt is a country of many civilizations, features and characteristic, from its Arab nationalist to its deep-rooted Islamic and Coptic identities, and from the genuine African to the historical Mediterranean. All have intermingled over the years and left their mark on Egypt's foreign policy. All these influences define our overlapping interests and guide our thinking and action in addressing problems and crises.

Egypt will continue to work for the achievement of peace and stability in the Middle East and the world. It will do its utmost for the well-being of its people, nation and region. We will continue the struggle for balanced and sustainable development. We will also

pursue our serious work for the benefit of the countries of the South.

Our delegation looks forward to working with Members in a spirit of openness to ensure the successful outcome of this session. We extend our hand to all countries, with an open mind and a sincere desire to achieve the international agenda before us.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Kevin Rudd, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia.

Mr. Rudd (Australia): This great body has been in existence for two thirds of a century — three times longer than its predecessor body, the League of Nations, and longer than previous attempts to fashion a continuing collective approach to the common problems of nation States. The question we must ask ourselves today is whether the United Nations remains effective in confronting the challenges of our time.

The United Nations was established in the grim aftermath of the two deadliest conflicts in human history, in which close to 80 million people were killed and entire families and almost entire generations lost for all time. The world came together out of necessity. There had to be a better way, and in the decades since we first met at San Francisco, we have managed to avoid another world war, although at times that seemed less than certain.

Today, we are faced with a different set of challenges and in different strategic, political and economic circumstances. We now live in a world that is more multipolar and more interconnected than ever before. We are confronted with the double-edged sword of globalization. The transformation of the global economy has increased living standards and lifted many hundreds of millions out of poverty.

At the same time, the increased interdependence of global financial markets ensured that no country connected to the world economy was spared the impact of the global financial crisis. Furthermore, the rapid transformation of global communications and the radical increase in global people movements have improved the well-being of all humankind. But equally, they have created or at least amplified a new set of security threats to all humankind: pandemic diseases, transnational organized crime and the continuing threat of global terrorism. There is also the global challenge of climate change. The unconstrained carbon emissions of one State impact on the long-term survival of all States. Climate change respects no national or geographic boundaries and thus simultaneously demands both national and integrated global responses.

So two thirds of a century after our formation, we the United Nations now face increasingly complex global challenges in an increasingly fragmented world and a much more contested international space. These new global realities create an imperative for responsive, representative and, most critically, effective systems of global governance.

If we fail to make the United Nations work and to make its institutions relevant to the great challenges we all now face, the uncomfortable fact is that the United Nations will become a hollow shell. Nation States may retain its form, but will increasingly seek to go around it and deploy other mechanisms to achieve real results.

And that is the question we all face today. It is a question of our collective political will to make the existing institutions work and combine the existing and unique legitimacy of the United Nations system with a new-found effectiveness on security, development and climate change.

The United Nations has most of the essential structures in place, but if the structures are to work we must harness the political will necessary to make them work. In other words, we must enable the institutions we have created to do the job for which they were created. Put even more starkly, we must do that which we say. If we have a Conference on Disarmament, it should do disarmament — not pretend. If we have a convention on climate change, it must do the job to tackle climate change — not just talk about it, and similarly with development. Otherwise, the credibility of the United Nations in the eyes of the world and our own citizens will eventually collapse. The international community can no longer tolerate the actions of a few dissenting States to roadblock the common resolve of the many.

The international community faces the continuing challenge of international terrorism. Terrorism knows no geographic or political boundaries. We are now in the tenth year since terrorists launched their murderous attack on this great city of New York. The threat of international terrorism remains alive. It continues to challenge civilized norms, to generate fear and insecurity, and to take innocent civilian lives in many parts of the world.

The outlawing of terrorist organizations under the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions, together with the individual and cooperative measures taken by Member States, reflect the unprecedented levels of international collaboration in responding to the worldwide threat of terrorism.

As part of the effort to combat terrorism, many Member States have their armed forces and other personnel committed to Afghanistan, again sanctioned by Security Council resolutions. These brave soldiers, police officers and aid workers, representing so many of the countries represented here in the General Assembly, including Australia, remain in Afghanistan following many years of conflict.

The result is that Afghanistan no longer represents an unimpeded base for the global operations of terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaida. The result is also that we are all contributing to the security and stability of Afghanistan as a nation. This has been a difficult war, but our collective resolve is strong enough to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a base for the export of terrorism.

Beyond Afghanistan, terrorism continues to remain a threat to people of all faiths and civilizations. We must remain nationally and internationally vigilant against the possibility of further terrorist attacks. The threat remains real.

We must equally be concerned about the continued challenge of nuclear proliferation. Violations of the non-proliferation regime by States such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran represent a potent and potential threat to us all. It is for this reason that Australia provides robust support to the United Nations sanctions regime against both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran.

The United Nations has played a critical role in promoting the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are mutually reinforcing processes and cannot be separated.

Australia's activism on arms control and disarmament remains undiminished. And there remains much urgent work to be done. In 1996, Australia sponsored the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in this Assembly to ensure its adoption. Since then, 182 States have signed the Treaty and 153 have ratified it. Nine more States are needed to ratify in order for the Treaty to enter into force. Australia welcomes recent statements by Indonesia and the United States concerning their intention to ratify the Treaty, and we would urge all States that to date have failed to indicate their intention to ratify the Treaty to do so in order to enable it to enter into force.

The most recent Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conference was held earlier this year. Australia and Japan worked closely together in the lead-up to the Conference, including through the jointly sponsored report of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND), prepared by the former Foreign Minister of Australia, Gareth Evans, and his Japanese counterpart, Yoriko Kawaguchi. This significant report provided substantial momentum in the lead-up to the Review Conference. We believe that the Evans-Kawaguchi report of the ICNND also represents the most comprehensive, practical and contemporary blueprint for the international community to both consider and adopt a comprehensive arms control and non-proliferation agenda.

The Review Conference agreed by consensus on 64 sets of actions. And Australia and Japan took the initiative this week in New York to jointly host a cross-regional meeting of Foreign Ministers, with the aim of working towards the implementation of those 64 actions. The potential catastrophe of nuclear conflict means that the status quo is not an option. We must move ahead with the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, and we must ensure that the United Nations disarmament machinery is doing its job.

On the wider question of security, the Australian Government, under Prime Minister Gillard, warmly welcomes the statement to this Assembly by the President of the United States concerning his efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and sustainable peace in the Middle East (see A/65/PV.11). Australia's position remains constant: such a settlement must allow both Israel and a future Palestinian State to live side by side in peace and security. Australia calls on all parties to put their shoulders to the wheel, to seize the historic opportunity that now presents itself to bring about a lasting peace. All States members of the General Assembly should welcome the prospect of both an Israeli and a Palestinian State being represented at the sixty-sixth session of the Assembly, to be held next year.

Over the past several years, Australia has promoted the concept of an Asia-Pacific community involving the active membership in the future architecture of our region of both the United States and the Russian Federation. Australia therefore welcomes the imminent membership of the United States and Russia in the East Asia Summit. The East Asia Summit leaders will take this historic decision in Hanoi in October. Australia, as a founding member of the East Asia Summit, looks forward to contributing to the evolution of this wider sense of community across this, the most dynamic region of the world.

On questions of wider human security, Australia remains fully engaged on international and regional challenges, including irregular movements of people, organized crime and people-smuggling.

The most immediate and pressing threat to the physical security of Australia's wider region lies in the scourge of natural disasters. The Asia-Pacific region has seen tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanoes and floods on a massive scale. Australia proposes that the international community consider afresh our capacity to respond rapidly, coherently and proportionately to large-scale natural disasters.

Within our own region, Australia argues that this would also represent an effective benefit to the peoples and countries of our region, which are particularly prone to natural disasters. It would also in time constitute a valuable confidence- and security-building measure among the armed forces, emergency services and security agencies of the various nation-States of the Asia Pacific. The magnitude of what I witnessed last week when I was in Pakistan underlines the importance of better planning, preparation and coordination to deal with natural disasters on a mass scale. We cannot afford simply to wait for another such disaster to occur before realizing that the resources of the United Nations and its agencies are simply incapable of meeting challenges of such an order of magnitude.

The challenges to global economic stability remain significant. The full impact of the global financial crisis is not yet clear. There are still systemic problems within the global financial system. These must be dealt with through the appropriate national and international institutions if we are to remove the underlying causes of the crisis that began in the United States in September 2008 and then proceeded to ravage the economies and the working people of the world.

Beyond the specific reforms necessary in the global financial system, the parallel problem of global financial imbalances must also be addressed. These have formed part of the Group of 20 (G-20) agenda, in which Australia is active. The objectives of the Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth agreed to by the G-20 States at their Pittsburgh summit in September 2009 remain essential and must be implemented if we are to act on the causes of the recent crisis.

Last December, the nations of the world assembled in Copenhagen for the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Australia was an active participant at Copenhagen. Together with a number of other States, Australia worked tirelessly to produce the Copenhagen Accord. The Accord did not represent all that the international community needed then in order to bring about a comprehensive response to the continuing challenge of climate change. It did, however, represented four significant advances.

For the first time, the Accord entrenched 2°C or less as the limit beyond which global temperatures could not be allowed to rise in order to avoid irretrievable climate change for the planet.

For the first time, both developed and developing countries accepted that they had responsibilities to bring about this outcome.

For the first time, developed and developing countries agreed to develop a framework for the measurement, reporting and verification of mitigation actions.

And for the first time, developed countries committed themselves to mobilizing an amount approaching $30 billion in international public financing for immediate action in developing countries to 2012, and to work towards a goal of mobilizing $100 billion annually by 2020 in funding from all sources.

Much, however, remains to be done. Australia believes the international community must urgently address the particular climate-change adaptation needs of the world's most vulnerable States, in particular the island countries of the Pacific, the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean.

One significant area of progress in the period ahead lies in the proper protection, preservation and reforestation of the world's rainforests. Collectively, rainforest degradation and deforestation in developing countries represents about one fifth of global greenhouse gas emissions. Australia stands ready to act with other States, including Norway, to build on the work already done, in order to achieve an effective outcome in this area as rapidly as possible. The international community needs to see an early sign of real success in our international efforts to combat climate change. We believe that action on rainforests, through what is called the REDD-plus set of initiatives — on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries — represents one such area of possible early advance.

Australia is now active on both the Secretary-General's High-level Panels, on global sustainability and on climate change finance. This, added to our continued participation in the UNFCCC, means that Australia will continue to be among the most globally active States in global forums for bringing about a comprehensive and effective global response to climate change. In doing so, the Governments of the world will have to closely consider new growth models that incorporate both the concept and the reality of lower-carbon economies.

For the economies of the world, this transformation — which some have called the next industrial revolution — also represents an unprecedented opportunity for investment and employment as the global economy embraces new efficiency measures and new renewable energy strategies. The international community needs to embrace a new way of looking at climate change, which sees action on climate change providing new industries, new investment and new job opportunities for the future.

All Governments represented in the Assembly participated in the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Australia fully embraces the MDG framework.

This week, in New York, we said that our aid programme has doubled over the last five years and is projected to double again by 2015. Over time, more of our aid will go to the least developed countries, and we will continue to give high priority to assisting the world's small island States, particularly our Pacific neighbours, in recognition of their special needs.

We expect to invest some $5 billion in education by 2015, including support for universal primary education. Australia also expects to invest at least $1.6 billion in women's and children's health up to 2015.

Australia applauds the initiative to create a new institution entitled UN Women, under the capable leadership of the new Under-Secretary-General, Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile. Australia looks forward to working with UN Women on the vast array of challenges which half of humanity faces and for which our existing international frameworks have been found wanting. The education of women and girls and the security of women and girls from violence and sexual abuse and exploitation must now become a core part of our global campaign for a fairer world.

Human rights abuses and humanitarian crises in failing States continue to plague us. We must enhance the negotiations on the responsibility to protect and support the mandate of the International Criminal Court. We must also continue to speak out against flagrant abuses.

Often it is the indigenous peoples of the world who suffer most. I am proud of Australia's apology to our own indigenous peoples and our policy of closing the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. I am also proud of Australia's support for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Australia is making a major effort in the treatment of our indigenous peoples, although we still have a long way to go.

Australia is a founding Member of the United Nations. We have been active in this institution for the last 65 years.

We are also a candidate for the Security Council for the 2013-2014 term. Australia has contributed 65,000 of our number to 52 different peacekeeping missions across the world. We remain active in several such peace operations today, including in Cyprus, Sudan, Timor-Leste and Afghanistan.

Over the years, Australia has a led a number of significant United Nations initiatives, including the Cambodia peace settlement and the conclusion of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as leading the force that

stabilized Timor-Leste after its people voted for independence.

Australia remains intimately engaged in all the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations. We are also active in other international institutions, including the Commonwealth.

Australia is the twelfth largest source of funding for the United Nations budget. Australia pays in full and on time. We always seek to do that which we say we will do.

Australia wants to be part of the solution to the many challenges that the international community now faces, not just point to the problems. Australia believes in the power of creative ideas and active diplomacy to solve long-standing international problems. Australia values good international citizenship. It is for these reasons that Australia has been committed to the United Nations since the very beginning.

The United Nations is inevitably imperfect. As the Organization's second Secretary-General — the great Swede, Dag Hammarskjöld — famously said, "The United Nations was not created in order to bring us to heaven, but in order to save us from hell".

Our responsibility today is to fulfil the vision that our forebears had for this great institution 65 years ago. Our responsibility is to make the United Nations fulfil its mission — to make the United Nations work through the combined political will of all Member States.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Kanat Saudabayev, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Saudabayev (Kazakhstan) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, I would like to offer congratulations on the upcoming sixty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. For an individual person, 65 is an age when life experience turns into wisdom. As the great Goethe once said, it is our experience that teaches us to truly appreciate life. Today, the United Nations, with its 65 years of experience gained in the noble work for peace and progress, is the most reputable and relevant international organization there is. Each State Member of the United Nations, regardless of its size or power, seeks to contribute to building a safer and better world.

On 29 August 1949, the first atomic explosion on the ancient Kazakh land was carried out near the city of Semipalatinsk, unleashing an insane nuclear arms race and inflicting enormous suffering on the people of Kazakhstan. On 29 August 1991, the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, issued a decree that unilaterally shut down, once and for all, one of the world's largest nuclear test sites.

It is highly symbolic that 18 years later, the General Assembly at its preceding session acted upon his initiative to adopt a resolution establishing 29 August as the International Day against Nuclear Tests (resolution 64/35). The unanimous adoption of the resolution has effectively reaffirmed the commitment of the international community to the process of reducing the nuclear threat.

The April visit of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to Kazakhstan started with a tour of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. Standing right on the former Ground Zero, he urged the international community to redouble its efforts to create a world free of nuclear weapons.

For the people of Kazakhstan, who know only too well all the horrors of nuclear tests, the issue of a total ban on such tests is particularly relevant. Over the course of 40 years, some 490 nuclear explosions were carried out at the Semipalatinsk test site, affecting more than half a million people and damaging territory as large as today's Germany.

Today we call upon States that have not signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to do so as soon as possible. The entry into force of the CTBT will become one of the key areas of effective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), an important instrument forming a foundation for the security of all humanity.

We are satisfied that the States parties to the NPT were able to adopt a final document last May at the conclusion of the latest NPT Review Conference. But new and more decisive steps are needed today for nuclear disarmament. An early drafting of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, which along with the CTBT should become an important pillar of the NPT, is one such step.

We believe that it is extremely important to begin, as soon as possible, to draft an international legally binding instrument providing security assurances by nuclear Powers to non-nuclear-weapon States. Only such assurances can effectively keep in check the aspirations of certain non-nuclear States to acquire nuclear weapons, which they regard as a guarantee of their own security.

The establishment of new zones free from nuclear weapons, including in the Middle East, would represent another step towards achieving the goal of a nuclear-free world. We are convinced that a focused and progressive move in that direction would contribute to the establishment of trust among neighbours in the region and lay the foundations for a radical change in the situation of that long-suffering region.

Addressing the Assembly from this rostrum, I would like to reaffirm the urgency and relevance of the initiative of the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, to draft a universal declaration on a nuclear-free world, which would reflect the commitment of all States to firmly and consistently move towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

We support the legitimate and inalienable right of each State party to the NPT to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, such activities should be carried out in a transparent manner and on the basis of strict compliance with all requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and under its control. Kazakhstan, the world's largest uranium producer, intends to contribute to the development of nuclear energy and is ready to host an international nuclear fuel bank, under the auspices of the IAEA, and to commit itself to its safe storage.

As 2010 Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Kazakhstan, in the interests of all participating States, has emphasized efforts to shape not a security space but a security community, free of dividing lines and zones with different levels of security.

The promotion of an atmosphere of trust in the interests of all and strengthening consensus on key issues in all three dimensions of OSCE activities has made it possible to reach a historic consensus on an OSCE summit, to be held on 1 and 2 December 2010 in the capital of Kazakhstan. It will be the first such event in the past 11 years. I have no doubt that this upcoming Astana summit will become a landmark in the progressive movement of the OSCE participating States towards shaping a truly common and indivisible security community in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian zones, based on shared values, principles and commitments.

In that regard, we view the discussion at this OSCE summit of the issue of the stabilization and social and economic rehabilitation of Afghanistan as an important contribution to regional and global security. Time has proven that a purely military solution to the Afghan problem does not exist. Accordingly, Kazakhstan favours enhanced efforts by the international community to adapt Afghanistan to post-war development. On the initiative of our head of State, an educational programme has begun this year to train some 1,000 Afghan nationals in the educational institutions of Kazakhstan for careers in medicine, agriculture and construction. We have allocated $50 million to that purpose.

The serious political crisis in Kyrgyzstan, which could have extremely negative consequences not only for Central Asia but also far beyond its borders, has demonstrated the lack of an effective and comprehensive mechanism to prevent such conflicts. That is why the forthcoming OSCE summit provides a unique opportunity to develop an appropriate mechanism, drawing on the great potential and experience of the OSCE, the United Nations and other multilateral institutions.

In the context of countering new challenges and threats, primarily terrorism and drug trafficking, we pay close attention to the implementation of counter-terrorism conventions and Security Council resolutions, and we support early adoption of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. Kazakhstan has actively supported the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. At the initiative of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan put forward at the global Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, in April 2010, a proposal for a conference on countering the financing of terrorism.

That phenomenon is closely linked to drug trafficking, and thus combating that scourge is one of our top priorities. Accordingly, Kazakhstan attaches great importance to the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Center (CARICC) for combating illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs,

psychotropic substances and their precursors, located in Almaty, Kazakhstan. We believe that CARICC can and should become a platform for interaction between regional anti-drug agencies.

We also intend to take those issues forward within the framework of our activities in other international organizations, including the upcoming 2011-2012 Kazakhstan chairmanship of the Ministerial Conference of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). One of the universally accepted themes is the promotion of the ideas of tolerance, non-discrimination, and intercultural and interfaith dialogue. At the initiative of the President of Kazakhstan, Astana has become the venue for a unique forum, the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, recognized today as an effective platform for dialogue to promote ideas of interfaith peace and harmony.

As a sponsor of resolution 62/90, we welcome the efforts of Member States, UNESCO and other international organizations to conduct activities in observance of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures.

We commend the work of the Alliance of Civilizations and stand ready to continue to actively cooperate with it to promote the goals and objectives of the Alliance at the international level.

Based on its experience, Kazakhstan supports the active use of the capacity of authoritative regional arrangements, such as the OSCE and the OIC, in efforts to overcome nationalism, religious intolerance, racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, and we intend to work for the adoption of concrete decisions within those organizations. We are deeply convinced that today security cannot be for a single country, region or continent alone. Therefore Kazakhstan believes that all existing structures of regional and international security must coordinate their efforts and cooperate actively together.

In this context, I would like to note with great satisfaction that the first meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia and the OSCE, which was held in June 2010 in Istanbul, has laid the foundation for a future transcontinental security belt. It appears that the level of institutional development of the Conference and the growing interest in its activities on the part of Asian countries will allow us to consider that forum as a prototype of a collective security system in Asia.

Today, the world is slowly but surely emerging from a severe financial and economic crisis. At this juncture, it is critically important to ensure that the development of a post-crisis model of development is not limited to cosmetic measures. Instead, it should produce a qualitative restructuring of the entire system of international economic relations. We believe that all the world's economic problems are rooted in the inefficiency of the existing world monetary system, which no one controls and which is not democratic.

Kazakhstan's leader has proposed that a new financial architecture be developed, with a global regulatory system to oversee financial markets at its core. Such a mechanism would allow us to avoid speculative interflows of resources that exist only on paper and a situation in which developing countries are actually financing consumption in the developed countries. The establishment of a more stable macroeconomic model, in our view, calls for the introduction of a single supranational currency, under the auspices of the United Nations.

Finding an urgent solution to environmental problems is one of our main responsibilities to future generations. It is also a prerequisite of preserving life on Earth. In this context, we have initiated plans for holding ministerial conferences for the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Europe in 2010 or 2011 in Astana. The goal of these events is to build a "green bridge" between Europe and Asia and to harmonize programmes for sustainable development and environmental protection.

We appreciate the assistance provided by the international community, including the United Nations and its specialized agencies and programmes, to our country's efforts to overcome the effects of environmental disasters in the Aral Sea and Semipalatinsk regions. Given their global nature, they call for an effective new approach on the part of the donor community to solve these problems.

Kazakhstan is firmly committed to the democratization of its society and building a State based on the rule of law. In February this year, our country successfully passed its first universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council and intends to fully implement its recommendations. Reaffirming its

commitment to open and constructive cooperation in the area of human rights, Kazakhstan has sent a standing invitation to all mandate holders of the Council's special procedures.

Our country has always been and still remains open to cooperation with the international community in the protection and realization of individual rights and freedoms. With those values and ideals in mind, Kazakhstan has put forward its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the 2012-2015 term, which we hope will be supported.

Over the past 65 years the United Nations has made an enormous contribution to international peace and security on the Earth and to the solution of many social, economic, humanitarian and other problems. It is in our common interests that the United Nations continue to demonstrate leadership in promoting peace and cooperation and sustainable progress on Earth. Kazakhstan not only has consistently supported and supports the activities of the United Nations, but always seeks to contribute to the attainment of the lofty goals set by our respected Organization.

The meeting rose at 2.15 p.m.